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G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS, NEW YORK & LONDON

THE STORY OF THE CIVIL WAR

A CONCISE ACCOUNT OF THE WAR IN THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BETWEEN 1861 AND 1865

BY

JOHN CODMAN ROPES, LL.D.

Member of the Massachusetts Historical Society, and the Military Historical Society of
Massachusetts; Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the
Royal Historical Society; Honorary Member of the United States
Cavalry Association, and the Royal Artillery Institution, etc.

Author of "The Army under Pope," "The First Napoleon,"
"The Campaign of Waterloo," etc.

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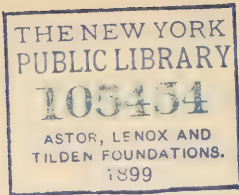
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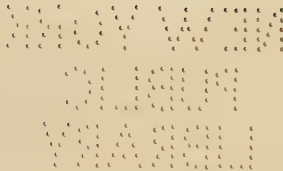
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W. W. W. W.
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Y. A. S. G. L.



LIST OF WORKS CITED, WITH THEIR ABBREVIATIONS.

THESE works are cited in the ensuing book by the words or letters which are in this list printed in capitals, and all works are cited after the usage which prevails in legal literature,—that is, the words “volume” and “page” are omitted, the number of the volume is prefixed to the title, and the number of the page follows it.

In citing the War Records, only the “serial number” (so called) of the volume is given. This was first printed on the back of the 36th serial number, which, according to its official designation, bears the cumbrous title of Series I., Vol. XXIV., Part I. Why the volumes were not numbered from the first in simple arithmetical (or serial) order, we have never been able to conjecture. It would greatly have simplified the task of the historian. The only comfortable way to do is to paste the “serial numbers” on the backs of the first thirty-five volumes; the government printers have printed the “serial numbers” on the backs of all the rest.

Until the publication of Vol. XXIV., Part I., the volumes (as we have said) bore only their official designations in Roman numerals. As the references to the earlier volumes have been made in this book by their “serial numbers,” a table harmonizing the same with their official designations is here given for the convenience of the reader:

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¹ To the writer's regret, this valuable work did not come into his possession until his own book was half through the press.

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THE STORY OF THE CIVIL WAR.

PART II.

NOTE.

It was originally planned to insert the maps in the chapters where they were referred to. The number and the size of the maps, however, made it necessary to modify this plan, and it was decided that it would be more convenient for the reader, to place the maps in a separate portfolio.



THE STORY OF THE CIVIL WAR.

CHAPTER I.

FORT DONELSON AND SHILOH.¹

IN February, 1862, while President Lincoln and General McClellan were disputing respecting the size and composition of the army which was to undertake the spring campaign in Virginia, and as to its line of operations, military events of the greatest importance were happening in the West.

The Confederates, it will be remembered, had entrusted to General Albert Sidney Johnston the entire control of their forces in this region; and that officer had hitherto succeeded, by maintaining very advanced positions in the State of Kentucky, in holding a large part of that State and also the State of Tennessee for the Confederate Government. The Confederate authorities were exceedingly averse to giving up any part of Kentucky, for although the State had not seceded, it was well known that a

¹ See Map I., facing page 98.

large part of the population had desired to carry the State out of the Union; while as for Tennessee, she was a member of the Confederacy. It was confidently expected in Richmond that Johnston would be able to maintain his hold on these States; but this expectation was founded rather on the unwillingness of the Confederate administration and Congress to admit the possibility of failure, than on a careful estimate of the military situation. In fact, Johnston's available force in the latter part of January, 1862, consisted mainly of the garrisons of Columbus, and other points on the Mississippi, under General Polk, numbering about 18,000 men,¹ and of the active army, then in the intrenched camp of Bowling Green, where Johnston commanded personally, numbering about 25,000 men.² These places were connected by rail, and to protect the points where the railroad crossed the Cumberland and Tennessee rivers, as well as to prevent these rivers from being used by the invaders, Forts Henry and Donelson had been erected. The recent reconnoissance made by General Halleck's orders, at General McClellan's suggestion, by General Grant and Commodore Foote, had had, for its only effect, to cause Johnston to strengthen the garrisons of these places,³ and at this time there were about 3000 men at Fort Henry, and 2000 at Fort Donelson, all under General Tilghman.⁴ The capture of these forts, and the destruction of the railway bridges across the rivers, would break the communications between the army at Bowling Green and the garrisons on the

¹ 7 W. R., 853.² *Ib.*, 852.³ Johnston, 424, 425.⁴ 7 W. R., 855.

Mississippi; would necessitate the retreat of Johnston from Bowling Green; and probably, also, would result in the evacuation of Columbus by Polk. For it would be manifestly out of the question for Johnston to maintain himself at Bowling Green when his line of retreat on Nashville was exposed, as it must be after the capture of Fort Donelson, to a Federal force ascending the Cumberland; and, after western Kentucky should have been evacuated by the Confederates, it would probably be found impossible for Polk to hold Columbus for any length of time.

In fact, the situation of the Confederates in Kentucky was an extremely precarious one. Johnston himself was fully aware of it; he had tried in vain to obtain sufficient reinforcements¹; he was gravely deficient in men, and the men he had were badly armed. He knew that the Federal ironclad fleet was far superior to any force that the Confederates could muster on the three rivers. He knew, in fact, that he could not maintain himself against well-directed attacks, and that his only chance lay in the possibility that his adversaries would make mistakes of which he could take advantage. He had, at any rate, so long as his communications remained unbroken, the advantage of interior lines; he could rapidly concentrate his forces. He did not at this time (January and February, 1862) fear any sudden movement of the enemy by land,² for the roads were in very bad condition, although, as he well knew, he could be

¹ 7 W. R., 788, 792-795, 820.

² He had, however, in December, when the roads were excellent, feared that his right might be turned: 7 W. R., 781, 792, 793.

flanked out of his camp at Bowling Green. He might, however, at any time, hear that Federal ships had ascended the Cumberland, or the Tennessee, or both rivers, and were attacking the forts.¹ This was, for the moment, the great danger. Johnston seems to have expected that the first movement of the Federal forces would be on the Cumberland River, and he afterwards wrote to President Davis that he had "determined to fight for Nashville at Donelson."²

In the last chapter but one³ we stated the comprehensive plan of General Buell⁴ for a movement of his own army by land on Bowling Green and Nashville, to be made simultaneously with an advance up the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers of a force of some 20,000 men of Halleck's command supported by the ironclad fleet; we called attention to the fact that this scheme had never enlisted the cordial support of the General-in-chief, McClellan, who preferred that Buell should begin his operations by the occupation of East Tennessee,⁵—a thing which President Lincoln also had much at heart; we pointed out that General Halleck, who would naturally have charge of the movements on the rivers, his Department comprising that part of Kentucky which was west of the river Cumberland, being at first strenuously opposed to Buell's scheme,⁶ subsequently (January 20th) urged,⁷ in place of it, that a movement be made up the rivers with a force of not less than 60,000

¹ 7 W. R., 844, 845.

³ Part I., ch. xi., 187.

⁵ *Ib.*, 206.

² *Ib.*, 259.

⁴ *Ib.*, 204.

⁶ *Ib.*, 204.

⁷ *Ib.*, 210, 211; 8 W. R., 508-510.

men, and that the greater part of Buell's army,—“all not required to secure the line of Green River,”¹—be sent to him for this purpose. This communication McClellan briefly acknowledged on the 29th, promising to “reply in full in a day or two.”²

And now we come to a feature in this transaction which is not easy of explanation. We find Halleck, on January 30th, the day after he had received this non-committal reply of the General-in-chief to his elaborate exposition of the true strategical dispositions demanded by the situation contained in his letter of the 20th,³ ordering Grant⁴ with only 15,000 men⁵ to take Fort Henry and break the railroad bridge across the Tennessee. This he does without having received any further word from McClellan, and without having made any arrangements with Buell for reinforcements, or for a simultaneous movement of Buell's army from Bowling Green to Nashville. Can it be supposed that he had changed his views in the ten days which had elapsed since he had made to the General-in-chief his careful presentation of the true course to be pursued,—that he had in the interval come to the conclusion that 15,000 men could accomplish what he had so short a time before considered a task for 60,000?⁶ And that it would not be necessary (as he had so recently thought it would be) for the bulk of Buell's army to be sent to him, in order to carry this movement to a successful con-

¹ Buell's army was at and near Nolin and Munfordville, north of Green River.

² 7 W. R., 930.

⁴ 7 W. R., 121.

³ 8 W. R., 508-510.

⁵ *Ib.*, 574, 575.

⁶ 8 W. R., 509, *ad finem*.

clusion? Or can we suppose that Halleck, having changed his views about the campaign, did not see the importance of giving the General-in-chief due notice of his intention to move at once, so that the latter might so dispose of his available forces as to reap the fullest advantage in the campaign, the first move only in which Halleck was making? It certainly may be, as we have ourselves suggested,¹ that Halleck was strongly influenced in deciding to take the initial step of ordering the attack of Fort Henry by the representations of the feasibility of capturing it made to him by Commodore Foote and Generals Grant and Smith.² But in our judgment the evidence shows that General Halleck clearly saw the immense importance of breaking the Confederate communications by taking Forts Henry and Donelson, and also believed that the movement would require the employment of nearly all the troops in Kentucky and Tennessee; and that, not having been successful in getting his plan of having the bulk of Buell's army sent to him for this purpose adopted by the General-in-chief, he deliberately took the first step in the campaign with the inadequate force at his disposal, feeling sure in his own mind that the Government would soon be compelled to send him from Buell's army all the men needed to carry the movement through to a successful conclusion. There was, he thought, a great chance for him to win a series of most important successes; and so, without orders, without even permission, without having made any arrangements for support, reinforcement,

¹ Part I., 211.

² 7 W. R., 120, 121, 561.

or co-operation,¹ but feeling confident that the requirements of the situation, as they would in time become developed, would make it imperative for the Government to send him the necessary means, he took the first step.

Halleck's own account of the matter is a very brief and unsatisfactory one. On January 29th, McClellan telegraphed Halleck that *a deserter had heard Confederate officers say*² that Beauregard was under orders to go to Kentucky with fifteen regiments.³ The next day Halleck notified McClellan that he had received his despatch, and said: "General Grant and Commodore Foote will be ordered to immediately advance, and to reduce and hold Fort Henry."⁴ On February 6th, he telegraphed McClellan, "*I was not ready to move,*⁵ but deemed best to anticipate the arrival of Beauregard's forces."⁶ Halleck, also, in his letter of instructions to Grant, told him that Beauregard had left Manassas with fifteen regiments for the line of Columbus and Bowling Green, and that it was therefore of the greatest importance to cut that line before he should arrive.⁷ On the question whether this story which the deserter told could have effected in General Halleck's mind an abrupt change of opinion in regard to the

¹ Cf. Buell to McClellan, 7 W. R., 587.

² The italics are ours.

³ 7 W. R., 571.

⁴ *Ib.*, 572.

⁵ The italics are ours.

⁶ 7 W. R., 587; cf. his letter to Buell, 593.

⁷ *Ib.*, 122. Here the deserter's story has grown into an ascertained fact. Yet the "instructions" were written on the same day on which he received McClellan's telegram.

proper strategy to be employed in this campaign, or can account for his extraordinary conduct in undertaking such an important movement without being "ready to move," and without first securing the sanction of General McClellan and the co-operation of General Buell, we have already indicated our opinion.

It was, however, unquestionably the right time to make the advance up the Cumberland and the Tennessee. The waters were exceptionally high, and all the obstructions which the Confederates had placed in the rivers were rendered useless. Of these facts General Buell was made aware by a letter from a friend in Paducah, and he lost not a moment in urging upon McClellan and Halleck the propriety of an immediate movement.¹ To his letter to the latter, dated January 30th,² he received the next day a reply that the movement had already been ordered.³ McClellan did not reply till February 5th,⁴ when he asked Buell to give him in detail his views as to the number of gunboats necessary, and then, still unwilling to substitute anything, no matter how promising, for the projected advance into East Tennessee, again urged on Buell the importance of immediate action in that region.

¹ 7 W. R., 572, 573. Buell, in a letter to Halleck dated February 3d, expressed the opinion that the gunboats could "run past the batteries at night without great risk. This accomplished," he continued, "the taking and holding Fort Henry and Dover [Fort Donelson] would be comparatively easy" (7 W. R., 580). But this was not attempted, though Halleck subsequently—February 10th—ordered it (*Ib.*, 601).

² *Ib.*, 573.

³ *Ib.*, 574; Halleck to Buell, January 31, 1862.

⁴ *Ib.*, 473.

Just here, in fact, lay the principal objection to Halleck's precipitate movement. McClellan had ordered Buell to follow up Thomas's victory of Mill Springs and invade East Tennessee. To do this successfully required not only that Thomas's column should be detached from Buell's main force, but that arrangements should be made for its protection in its long march. It was while these movements were in progress, and while Buell's troops were much scattered and separated, that Halleck announced that he had undertaken to advance up the Tennessee River.¹

It will readily be granted that if General McClellan had taken the same view of the military situation in Kentucky and Tennessee which General Buell took, he would have placed Buell in command of the Union forces throughout those States. The opportunity of inflicting a deadly blow on the power of the Confederates in this region had been clearly perceived by Buell from the time he assumed command at Louisville.² He had, from the first, recognized the possibility of breaking their lines of communication, and had foreseen the immense results which might be expected therefrom,—the recovery of the two States to the national cause, and the demoralization and disintegration of the Confederate army of the West. But to carry out such a scheme to perfection required that all the forces of the United States in that region should be under the control of one man, and that he should be on the spot. If General McClellan had intended to carry out this scheme,

¹ 7 W. R., 931 ; 473, 586, 936.

² Part I., 200 *et seq.*

we may be sure that he would have entrusted it to Buell. He would not have given it to Halleck, for Halleck, as appears from his own repeated statements, had his head full of the affairs of Missouri. But McClellan had no such scheme in his mind. All he wanted and all he expected was that Buell should invade East Tennessee; and it is altogether probable, that, if Halleck had not, for reasons of his own, without orders from McClellan, and even without giving him notice of what he was proposing to do, ordered Grant and Foote up the Tennessee River, a movement by Thomas under Buell's direction upon East Tennessee, to carry out McClellan's and President Lincoln's wishes, would have been the only military operation of consequence in this region in the early spring of 1862.

Halleck's precipitate move, however, forced McClellan to renounce the invasion of East Tennessee. Buell's elaborate letter ¹ of February 1st, urging the abandonment of this project, and advocating a movement on Bowling Green in conjunction with one up the rivers, seems to have received no reply. But while Buell was sending, on the 5th, a despatch ² insisting strongly on this course, McClellan was sending him a request ³ to make a demonstration on Bowling Green, to relieve the pressure on Halleck; and on the 6th, ⁴ he suggests to Buell the advisability of throwing "all available force on Forts Henry and Donelson," and "of making that the main line of operations." Thenceforward the attention of

¹ 7 W. R., 931-933.

² *Ib.*, 585.

³ *Ib.*, 584.

⁴ *Ib.*, 587.

both McClellan and Buell was devoted to securing the success of the campaign which Halleck had so recklessly begun; but we shall see, as we proceed, how much was lost and how much more was unnecessarily risked by entrusting the fortunes of the campaign to co-operation between two officers of equal rank in different Departments, instead of to the single and uncontrolled direction of a single general on the spot.

Fort Henry, against which General Halleck was about to send the combined expedition under General Grant and Commodore Foote, was situated on the right (or eastern) bank of the river Tennessee, about forty miles from the town of Paducah in Kentucky, where the Tennessee empties into the Ohio. About twelve miles east of Fort Henry,¹ situated on the left (or western) bank of the river Cumberland, which here runs north into the Ohio in a course nearly parallel to that of the Tennessee, and just north of the little town of Dover, was Fort Donelson. Both these works were in the State of Tennessee; their sites had been selected and their construction had been begun in the previous summer under the direction of the authorities of the State. It has been said,² and it is very likely true, that if the Government of Tennessee had not felt bound to respect the neutrality, so long maintained, of Kentucky, better sites could have been found in that State, especially at a point where the two rivers approach within three miles of each other.³ But when

¹ 7 W. R., 161; Johnston, 403.

² Johnston, 407.

³ 1 Beauregard, 217, n.

the sites for these forts were selected, the soil of Kentucky was not open to the engineer officers of Tennessee, and they were obliged to make the best choice they could from the positions available to them in their own State.¹ It cannot be said that they displayed very good judgment in their selection of sites for these forts. Fort Henry was laid out on ground so low that the magazine was liable to be flooded when the river rose.² The work was also completely commanded by a high hill on the opposite shore, easily within range. Heights on the same shore, too, and not far from the fort, could, if occupied by an enemy, seriously imperil its safety.³ As for Fort Donelson, it was also commanded by high ground a short distance only from its northerly side. Both works, however, could bring a heavy fire to bear upon any vessels undertaking to ascend the rivers. Twelve out of the seventeen guns of Fort Henry swept the channel of the Tennessee. Thirteen guns in the batteries of Fort Donelson commanded the approach to that work by the Cumberland River.

Both forts, however, were too large—Fort Henry covered ten acres, Fort Donelson a hundred.⁴ To defend them at all several thousand men were needed; but to make an obstinate and protracted defence, it was absolutely necessary to hold a large area of ground in the neighborhood of each fort, and many thousand men might easily be required for such extensive tasks. This was, it may be

¹ Johnston, 407, 408.

² 7 W. R., 149; 11 W. R., 4, 5.

³ 7 W. R., 139.

⁴ Johnston, 426, 440.

here remarked, a common fault of the Confederate works; they were too large,—resembling intrenched camps almost as much as forts,—and often, as at Forts Henry and Donelson, having lines of field-works outside, for supporting infantry.¹ Such conditions made too heavy a draft on the limited resources of the Confederate armies. Thousands of men were shut up in these works who should have been serving in the field with the active armies.²

Both forts were under the command of General Tilghman, an educated and competent officer of the old army. He had between 5000 and 6000 men at his disposal at the time when the attack began.

The expedition for the capture of Fort Henry consisted of a force of about 15,000 men under General Grant,³ and of a fleet of four ironclad and three wooden gunboats under Flag-Officer Foote.⁴ The 1st division under General McClelland left Paducah on the afternoon of the 3d of February, 1862,⁵ in transports preceded and accompanied by the gunboats, and landed early the next morning⁶ some eight or nine miles below the fort. Grant himself soon arrived; and, boarding the gunboat *Essex*, steamed up the river to obtain, if possible, a more convenient place for the landing of his troops. The fort opened upon the vessel, one rifled shot passing through the deck,⁷ and it was the sound of this

¹ 11 W. R., 352.

² Cf. Johnston's *Narrative*, 85, 86.

⁴ *Ib.*, 122.

³ 7 W. R., 575; 581, 583.

⁵ *Ib.*, 581.

⁶ *Ib.*, 126. McClelland is apparently in error in stating that he started on the 2d and arrived the next day; cf. 1 Grant, 288.

⁷ 7 W. R., 581.

heavy firing which first notified the Confederate general, who happened at the moment to be at Fort Donelson, of the presence of the Federal forces on the Tennessee River.¹ During the day McClernand's division re-embarked and landed about four or five miles nearer the fort.² The transports then returned to Paducah for the remainder of the force,—a division under General C. F. Smith,—and, on the next day, the 5th, nearly the whole command had arrived. Smith's division disembarked on the left bank of the river, and proceeded at once to seize the heights there, on which a work, styled Fort Heiman, had been begun. The place was found abandoned.

There was no unnecessary delay. On the morning of the 6th, McClernand's division was ordered to move inland to the road which led to Fort Donelson, while the fleet, on whose ability to reduce Fort Henry both Grant and Foote mainly relied, was to attack the work. It was the expectation not only to reduce the fort, but to capture the entire garrison by preventing them from reaching Fort Donelson.

About half-past eleven in the morning the gunboats came in sight of the fort, and, about an hour later, at the distance of a mile, they opened fire. The fort replied vigorously, but the gunboats steadily advanced. They carried over fifty guns, and their fire swept the fort from end to end. The ironclads were for the most part protected by their armor from the effect of the heavy shot which the fort poured upon them. The *Essex*, however, although an ironclad, received a shot which penetrated her

¹ 7 W. R., 133, 137.

² *Ib.*, 127, 581.

boiler, causing serious injuries to her commander, Porter, and killing and wounding many of her crew. But the guns of the fort, being nearly on a level with the water, possessed neither the immunity nor the advantage of position of those in a fort situated at a considerable height above the water. Still, the fleet would undoubtedly have suffered much more severely, and very possibly might have been repulsed, had not several of the most powerful guns in the fort been accidentally disabled, in addition to those injured by the fire of the ships. Tilghman was not long in seeing that his case was hopeless; he early gave orders for his main body to retire to Fort Donelson; but being himself a brave and resolute man, he was unwilling to surrender till the last moment, and he also protracted the defence as long as possible so as to give the troops outside the fort the time needed to make good their retreat towards Fort Donelson.¹ About 2. P.M. the fort was surrendered. Only the artillerymen and the sick in the hospital were made prisoners, the troops effecting their retreat to Fort Donelson.

Immediately after the fall of Fort Henry, two of the gunboats, the *Lexington* and *Tyler*, under Lieutenant-Commander Phelps, proceeded up the river, and, that night, destroyed the railway bridge across the Tennessee and burned several Confederate transport-steamers. Pursuing his course up the river, Phelps, on the 8th, reached the town of Florence, in Alabama, at the foot of the shallows known as Muscle Shoals, destroying on his way large quanti-

¹ 7 W. R., 140, 142.
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ties of supplies destined for the Confederate army, and spreading alarm throughout the whole region.

The effect of the capture of Fort Henry on the people of the whole country, North and South, was electrical. It was the first great success won by the Union arms within the limits of the Confederacy. It was accomplished, too, so suddenly and so unexpectedly that the spirits of the Northern people were elated almost beyond measure, while those of the people of the South were correspondingly depressed. The brilliant and apparently irresistible attack of the fleet, to which alone the capture of the fort was due, greatly intensified these feelings, for it seemed as if the North possessed a weapon which the South was powerless to resist. This was not true, as subsequent events were soon to show, but at the time every one seems to have been of this opinion. Johnston wrote ¹ on February 8th to the Secretary of War at Richmond that the slight resistance at Fort Henry indicated that the best open works could not meet successfully a vigorous attack by ironclad gunboats. Feelings of distrust and alarm were rife throughout the South.

So convinced was the Confederate general that Fort Donelson must succumb to an attack by the Federal fleet, in which event the Cumberland River would be open as far as Nashville, that he decided, on the day after Fort Henry fell, to evacuate Bowling Green, and to retreat to and across the Cumberland River to Nashville.² At the same time he sent

¹ 7 W. R., 131, 863; *cf.* Gilmer to Mackall, *ib.*, 869; Floyd to Johnston, *ib.*, 865.

² 7 W. R., 861; Johnston, 487.

about 12,000 men to Fort Donelson, thereby raising the total force there, including some troops which had arrived from Columbus, to rather over 18,000 men.¹ To the command of this force he assigned General Floyd, who had been Secretary of War in Mr. Buchanan's Cabinet, and had lately commanded in West Virginia. He reserved for his own immediate command only about 14,000 men, with whom, on February 11th and 12th,² he fell back from Bowling Green, reaching Nashville on the 16th.³

It is not easy to discover General Johnston's reasons for detaching Floyd's command from the main army, or to imagine what task he expected that officer to perform.⁴ He had fully recognized that the fort was not tenable,⁵—at least, against an attack by water,—and augmenting its garrison certainly would not render it more capable of resisting the Federal gunboats.⁶ Did he then expect Floyd to defeat Grant? It was, it is true, possible, immediately after the capture of Fort Henry, to concentrate in the neighborhood of Fort Donelson a force largely superior to that which General Grant would have under his command; and in that case Grant might be attacked and defeated before he could carry the lines of the fort, defended as they were by some 5000 men. To attempt this was assuredly Johnston's true course, if he proposed to attempt

¹ Johnston, 443; 7 W. R., 922.

² Johnston, 493.

³ *Ib.*, 494.

⁴ "I determined," he subsequently wrote to President Davis, "to fight for Nashville at Donelson."—7 W. R., 259.

⁵ 7 W. R., 861; Johnston, 487.

⁶ Johnston, 435.

anything at all; for a severe defeat inflicted on the Federal land forces could not but have a great moral effect; it might even counterbalance the shock occasioned by the capture of the forts by the Federal fleet. But to carry out this scheme required that a much larger force should be sent to the neighborhood of Fort Donelson than that which Johnston despatched, and that the precise object of the movement should be clearly prescribed in the orders to Floyd, who should be instructed that he was not sent there to throw his command into an untenable work, but to defeat, if he could, the enemy's army, either as it approached the work, or after it had sat down before it.¹

It is plain from Johnston's orders that he had no such scheme as this in his mind. Operations in the open field formed no part of his plan. All that he proposed to do was to throw into the work a garrison large enough to defend it for a time against the Federal investing forces; and he appears to have relied on the ability of the general in charge, in the event of the fort being taken, to extricate his command and rejoin the main body. "I was in hopes," he afterward wrote to President Davis, "that such dispositions would have been made as would have enabled the forces to defend the fort, or withdraw without sacrificing the army."² Accordingly his only orders to B. R. Johnson, who succeeded Tilghman, and to Pillow, who succeeded Johnson, were to take command of the post.³ Floyd, who ranked

¹ General Halleck feared that Johnston would make this attempt: 7 W. R., 590, 591, 632.

² 7 W. R., 260.

³ *Ib.*, 278, 358.

them both, was at first directed "to repair at once to the support of the garrison,"¹ and, on the 14th, he was told, "if he lost the fort, to get his troops back to Nashville, if possible."²

It happened, just at this time, that General Beauregard had been assigned to duty in the Mississippi Valley, and, on his way to Columbus, where he proposed to establish his headquarters, he reached Bowling Green on the evening of the 4th of February. Here he remained for a week, and was in constant consultation with his superior officer, General Johnston. He entirely approved of the latter's decision on the fall of Fort Henry to evacuate Bowling Green and retire to Nashville.³ But he urged on Johnston to go to Fort Donelson himself and to take 10,000 men with him in addition to those already sent, so that he might be able to attack Grant with an army of 25,000 men, or thereabouts (exclusive of the troops retained as the garrison of the fort).⁴ Johnston, however, would not adopt his advice, being unwilling to reduce to 4000 men the force which was retiring on Nashville before Buell's army, which it was known would immediately advance on that city, and believing that the proper task for himself was to conduct the retreat in person.

Returning now to the question asked above,—what was General Johnston's plan of operations,

¹ 7 W. R., 267.

² *Ib.*, 260, 880.

³ *Ib.*, 863, 864.

⁴ 1 B. & L., 571, 572; 1 Beauregard, 217, 227, 230, 231. But that Beauregard gave this advice is denied by Johnston's biographer; 1 B. & L., 548.

what did he expect to accomplish by the steps which he took?—we must say that we cannot tell. The 18,000 men under Floyd within the lines of Fort Donelson and its outlying intrenchments, exposed to the bombardment of Commodore Foote's gunboats and to the assaults of General Grant's soldiers,—might indeed hold the works for a few days, but it was as certain as anything could be that they would be forced to surrender in the end. There was no reason why the Federal investing army should not be reinforced to any needed extent. There was no possibility of relieving the beleaguered garrison. Johnston had no army with which to march to their aid. There were no Confederate gunboats on the rivers. There was nothing for Floyd and his men to do but to leave the fort to its fate and to try to cut their way out of a trap into which they should never have been sent.¹ The 5000 men who constituted the original garrison of both the forts and were all now in Fort Donelson were enough to hold the place against a *coup-de-main*, and, if Johnston had been willing himself to take the field at the head of 20,000 or 25,000 men, and attack Grant, they might have been withdrawn if the attack failed. At any rate, this was Johnston's only chance of achieving any success. It was, perhaps, not a very promising chance, for there was every reason to suppose that Grant would be reinforced largely from time to time until his task was accomplished. But to defeat Grant's army was, we repeat, the only chance for the Confederates. To throw a large garrison into a fort

¹ But see Johnston, 453.

which was attacked on all sides, when there was not the slightest expectation of relieving the garrison either by land or water, was simply to invite disaster. To carry out Johnston's plan of "fighting for Nashville at Donelson," something other than defending Donelson was demanded,—namely, a daring and resolute attempt to defeat the army which was attacking Donelson.

There can be little doubt that Beauregard's advice was sound. The withdrawal of the balance of the Confederate army from Bowling Green to Nashville, where the very muddy roads prevented active pursuit, would not have been a difficult matter for a general of average experience and good ability; and in Hardee, who was next in rank to Johnston, the Confederates had an officer quite adequate to such a task. The real question was, whether it was possible to defeat Grant. If it was, then Johnston should have taken charge of the matter himself, and should have taken with him all the troops he could spare. The true place for Johnston under such circumstances was where the critical conflict was to be fought; no one could meet the certain calls and the unforeseen exigencies of the expedition against Grant so fully as the General-in-chief; it was for him to inspire the soldiers with the hope of success and with the confidence of being ably and gallantly led to victory. Johnston, too, was precisely the man for such an emergency. He was eminently a fighting man; a resolute and determined officer. Nothing but his conviction that he ought personally to be with his own army in its retreat before Buell's, in-

duced him to make the fatal mistake of entrusting to the incompetent hands and heads of Floyd and Pillow a task of vital importance to the cause which he served.

Fort Henry, it will be remembered, had fallen on February 6th. General Grant fully intended to move at once on Fort Donelson. He wrote to Halleck the same day that he should "take and destroy" Fort Donelson on the 8th.¹ But as the fleet had to repair damages, and as he did not "feel justified" in attacking the place without the co-operation of some at least of the gunboats,² he did not move until the 12th. On that day he started with the divisions of McClelland and C. F. Smith. Another division, which had just arrived under Lewis Wallace, and which included a brigade (Cruft's) sent by General Buell,³ went round by water. Before night the neighborhood of the fort was reached by McClelland and Smith, and the troops had taken up a position surrounding the work. The next day Wallace arrived, the lines were rectified, and some fighting took place. On the 14th the fleet arrived. Commodore Foote at once took his ships into action. But this time the fates were against him. The Confederate guns were better placed,⁴ and they did not burst, or meet with any disabling accidents. Their fire was accurate and well kept up, and the Federal vessels, though handled with the greatest gallantry,

¹ 7 W. R., 124.

² *Ib.*, 600.

³ *Ib.*, 612.

⁴ The guns at Fort Donelson were 32 feet above the river; 7 W. R., 154.

were found to be no match for the fort. Two of the ironclads, the *St. Louis*, which carried the Commodore, and the *Louisville*, had their steering-apparatus shot away, and helplessly drifted down the river out of the action. The other two were so greatly damaged between wind and water as to be compelled to withdraw. The two wooden vessels necessarily followed suit. The whole fleet was rendered unserviceable, and Foote himself was badly wounded. It was necessary to send the disabled gunboats to Cairo to be repaired, and further operations by water were accordingly indefinitely postponed.

The Federal army did no fighting on the 14th of February. General Grant merely extended his lines, and completed the investment of the fort and the outlying works. He expected that the fleet would reduce the fort, and that in that case the garrison and supporting troops would soon be compelled to surrender to the United States forces which surrounded them. But after he had witnessed the repulse of the fleet he felt that a speedy victory was not to be expected. He looked forward to a protracted siege. The enemy's works appeared to him too strong to be assaulted successfully by the raw troops at his disposal. It seemed not unlikely that siege-operations might be required.¹ Moreover "the weather had turned intensely cold; the men were without tents, and could not keep up fires where most of them had to stay,"² in full range of the enemy's guns. "The sun went down," says General

¹ 7 W. R., 613, 614.

² 1 Grant, 299, 303.

Grant in his *Memoirs*, "on the night of the 14th of February, 1862, leaving the army confronting Fort Donelson anything but comforted over its prospects."¹

The problem was, however, nearer a solution than General Grant thought. Inside the Confederate lines, instead of increased confidence, caused by the defeat of the Federal gunboats, the feeling of being surrounded, imprisoned, doomed to inevitable capture by an enemy whose numbers seemed hourly to be increasing, was predominant, and far outweighed the satisfaction of having successfully maintained the fort against the naval attack.² It was feared that the Federal troops would gain the bank of the river above the fort, establish batteries there to command the river, and thus prevent supplies reaching the defenders. A council of war, consisting of Generals Floyd, Pillow, and Buckner, was called in the evening, and it was decided to attack the Federal right at daybreak the next morning, with the view of opening the road by which the army could retire to Nashville.³ In this plan the three generals cordially concurred.⁴ Floyd, indeed, had never been in favor of concentrating such a large force at Fort Donelson. He had, as late as the 12th, attempted to unite the bulk of his available forces at Cumberland City, where the railroad diverges from the river, and from which point he could move upon any Federal force crossing from Fort Henry to Fort Donelson,⁵ and he

¹ 1 Grant, 303.

³ *Ib.*, 268.

² 7 W. R., 263, 265, 268, 281, 331.

⁴ *Ib.*, 265, 268, 281, 330.

⁵ Floyd to Johnston; *Ib.*, 272.

had even ordered the withdrawal of Buckner's division from Fort Donelson to Cumberland City.¹ But he had been overruled by Johnston, and ordered to the fort.² His own views as to the folly of attempting to hold the place with no larger a force than that under his command were very clear.³ Hence he was strongly in favor of making an immediate effort to cut his way out. But, lacking, as he was, in military knowledge and experience, he contented himself with simply ordering an attack to be made the next morning; he gave no directions, and made no provision, for the very difficult task which, in the event of success, would have to be undertaken instantly, that of beginning a retreat which was almost certain to be followed up actively by the United States forces. For this, the most precise arrangements as to transportation and supplies, order of march, and formation of a rear-guard, were obviously required. But Floyd entirely neglected to provide for this part of his scheme.⁴ In fact, nothing was even said at the council about commencing the retreat of the army immediately from the field of battle, in case the attack on the Federal right wing should meet with the success which was hoped for, and the road to Nashville should be opened.⁵

The next morning, the 15th, the right wing of the Federal army under McClelland was vigorously and persistently attacked, and after a brave and obstinate resistance it was forced to give way in some confusion. The division of Wallace, on its left, also

¹ 7 W. R., 328.³ *Ib.*, 271.² *Ib.*, 267.⁴ *Ib.*, 265, 315, 365, 387.⁵ *Ib.*, 387.

suffered a good deal. By one o'clock in the afternoon the road to Nashville was opened. The action was stubbornly contested on both sides, but the result was a decided victory for the Confederates. They had, in fact, gained what they had aimed at.

Then, at the very moment of victory, Pillow, who had directed the principal attack, ordered the troops back to their intrenchments¹; and Floyd acquiesced in this most extraordinary and fatal blunder.² It was, no doubt, true, as Pillow afterwards urged in his defence, that no preparations whatever had been made for a retreat from the field³; that the men had no rations with them⁴; that the wagon-trains had not been made up; that none of the needful arrangements had been made. But it was early in the day; all the troops had not been engaged; and it was certainly possible to fit out trains with a sufficiency of provisions and ammunition to enable the army to avail itself of the advantage of position it had just gained. The march past the defeated troops of McClernand might certainly have been protected by the division of Buckner, acting as a rear-guard⁵; and although the sufferings of the men in their imperfectly equipped condition would have been great, and the whole movement would necessarily have been hazardous, owing to the neglect of the commanding general to make any preparations for a

¹ 7 W. R., 283, 314, 318.

² *Ib.*, 332, 333.

³ *Ib.*, 318.

⁴ General Grant, however, says: "I heard some of the men say that the enemy had come out with knapsacks, and haversacks filled with rations"; 1 Grant, 307. This may have been true of a part of the Confederate forces.

⁵ 7 W. R., 332.

retreat, yet it can scarcely be doubted that a large part of the Confederate army would, if the attempt had been made, have succeeded in reaching Nashville.¹ Whether, in this event, Floyd would not have been severely criticised by an exacting and impatient public for abandoning the fort, is another matter. But it is plain enough that a march from the field which had just been won was what should have been attempted; and it is certain that Pillow, whose order to his victorious troops to retire to their intrenchments had been apparently in part carried out before Floyd was cognizant of it,² was mainly responsible for the course taken by the Confederates.

By a singular mischance General Grant was not with his troops in this affair. Commodore Foote had sent for him,—the Commodore having been wounded in the naval attack,—that he might confer with him in regard to the situation. General Grant made all the despatch he could in going and returning, but he had a long way to ride to and from the landing-place below the fort, and the fleet had dropped some distance down the river. When he reached the field, the fighting was over, and the victorious Confederates had made their way back to their old lines in obedience to Pillow's preposterous orders.³ Grant, who had apparently in his conference with Foote settled on the adoption of a waiting policy, on meeting McClernand and Wallace, directed them to withdraw their commands out of cannon range and to throw up works.⁴ He was then in-

¹ 7 W. R., 266.

² *Ib.*, 266, 269.

³ 1 Grant, 307.

⁴ 1 B. & L., 422.

formed that the right wing of the army had been defeated, and that the road to Nashville was now open to the enemy. Observing, however, that the Confederates were not making any use of their success of the morning, he very naturally supposed them to be more or less disorganized or even demoralized.¹ This, as we know, was not the case; but General Grant was quite warranted in his inference, and, at any rate, the fact was plain to every one that the enemy had fallen back to their lines. Remarking to his lieutenants that "the position on the right must be retaken,"² and so warning them to go to work at once to collect and reorganize their scattered troops, Grant rode off to his headquarters and wrote a despatch to Commodore Foote, which showed him to be laboring under an anxiety about the situation which he had been far too wise to disclose to his subordinates on the field. "If," wrote he to Foote,³ "all the gunboats that can will immediately make their appearance to the enemy, it *may*⁴ secure us a victory. *Otherwise, all may be defeated.* A terrible conflict ensued in my absence, which has demoralized a portion of my command, and I think the enemy is much more so. If the gunboats do not show themselves, it will reassure the enemy, and still further demoralize our troops. *I must order a charge to save appearances.* I do not expect the gunboats to go into action, but to make appearance, and to throw a few shells at long range."

Evidently Grant was very anxious as to the effect

¹ 7 W. R., 159, 618.

² 1 B. & L., 422.

³ 7 W. R., 618.

⁴ The italics are ours.

of the morning's defeat on his raw troops, if the fleet should stay away. He therefore begged the Commodore to put in an appearance at any rate, and to fire a few shells at the fort. He also indeed proposed to "order a charge," but it was mainly "to save appearances," that is, to show to his own men and to the enemy that his army was still on the offensive. It is clear that he did not expect any important result from the charge; it was, he saw, the proper thing to order, but he relied mainly on the reappearance of the fleet to restore confidence to his troops.

Having sent off this despatch, General Grant rode immediately to the left to see General C. F. Smith, and to give him the order to assault the works in his front. Smith, who was one of the most indefatigable and experienced officers in the service, had improved the leisure of the previous day in making a personal reconnoissance of the enemy's lines, and had discovered a weak place in them.¹ Receiving Grant's order towards three o'clock,² he put his troops in motion without delay. The ground over which the assault must be made was very rough and broken, and was obstructed by felled trees and *abatis*. Fortunately for the attacking party, the lines were not fully manned, Buckner, who had charge of them, not having been able to bring his troops back to their position before Smith assaulted³; still, the few troops which were in the works de-

¹ Smith's Report, *Magazine of American History*, January, 1886, 27.

² *Ib.*, 37.

³ Buckner's Report, 7 W. R., 327, 333; 1 Grant, 307.

fended themselves with great spirit and tenacity. Smith ordered the men to take the caps off their muskets and to advance with fixed bayonets.¹ He himself, though the commander of the division, led the charge in person, feeling the importance of his presence to the raw volunteers. The advance was steadily and gallantly made under a heavy fire, and the works were handsomely carried. Buckner with his returning troops made repeated efforts to retake them during the afternoon, but without success. At sunset the Confederates desisted from further attempts. The position thus carried by Smith was found to possess an unusual importance. It was, in fact, an angle of the works inside the fort. It practically commanded the entire work.²

After having given the order to Smith to assault on the left, General Grant ordered McClellan and Wallace to advance their commands and reoccupy their abandoned lines.³ This they succeeded without difficulty in accomplishing; so that by dark the Union right wing was again in the path of any possible Confederate retreat.

The Confederate generals inside the fort recognized to the full the gravity of the situation. A council of war was held that evening. It was known that the Union forces had reoccupied their lines on their right. The Confederates were in no condition to attempt again to open the road to Nashville. They were exhausted by the severity of the weather,

¹ *Magazine of American History*, January, 1836, 41: Newsham's letter.

² McPherson's Report, 7 W. R., 163.

³ *Ib.*, 179, 180.

and greatly fatigued by the fight of the morning, in which, too, they had suffered severe loss.¹ It was, moreover, known that General Grant had recently received reinforcements. Pillow indeed advocated another effort to cut their way out; but Floyd and Buckner were decided in their opinion that the thing was impracticable. Buckner, who was an educated and capable officer, said that he was sure of being attacked in the morning, and that he could not hold his position half an hour. Both he and Floyd saw no other course to take but to surrender the post and garrison on the best terms possible. Floyd, however, stated that he would not become a prisoner, and Pillow followed his example.² Floyd then turned over the command to Pillow, and Pillow turned it over to Buckner, and he and Floyd thereupon left the fort. Buckner immediately despatched a note to General Grant proposing the appointment of commissioners to agree upon terms of capitulation. Grant wrote back the since famous reply that "no terms except an unconditional and immediate surrender" could be accepted, and stated that he proposed "to move immediately" upon the enemy's works; whereupon Buckner, without further parley, surrendered his command.

About 11,500 men³ with forty guns⁴ were the fruits of this great victory. Forrest retired with his

¹ 7 W. R., 335.

² *Ib.*, 288.

³ Johnston, 479; Cullum to Halleck, 7 W. R., 944. Badeau, however, says that 14,623 rations were issued to the prisoners. 1 Badeau, 51, n.

⁴ 7 W. R., 159.

cavalry, and the greater part of a Virginia brigade found an escape with Floyd, on the steamers at his disposal. There were also a great many stragglers, most of whom got away because the Union soldiers were in too exhausted a state to take efficient measures to secure their prisoners. The United States forces lost nearly 3,000 men killed and wounded¹; the Confederates, according to their own statement, not half as many.²

The capture of Fort Donelson was not a great affair judged by the number of the slain, but judged by its moral and strategical results, it was one of the turning points of the war. Following so soon as it did after the loss of Fort Henry, the news of the surrender of Donelson threw the Southwest into a state of excitement, not to say of panic, hardly to be described. Denunciations of Floyd, Pillow, Buckner, and (most of all) of Johnston himself were freely made. The Confederate Congress appointed a committee of inquiry. President Davis was urged to remove Johnston. Nashville was on the verge of an outbreak. The excitement was the more intense because up to the very last moment the despatches from Floyd and Pillow had been most encouraging.³ Then, without a single word of warning, came the news of the surrender.⁴

In the North, exultation, confident expectation, rising almost to the dangerous point of underestimating the remaining resources and the enduring valor of the South, were the feelings of the hour.

¹ 7 W. R., 169.

³ *Ib.*, 495 ; 7 W. R., 255.

² Johnston, 479.

⁴ *Ib.*, 256.

And no one can wonder at it. The whole system of the Confederate defence in the West had been broken up. It seemed well within the limits of possibility to follow up Sidney Johnston until he should be forced to surrender with what was left of his army. Chattanooga, the key of East Tennessee, apparently lay open to the invading Federal armies on one flank, and Vicksburg, the only strong post on the lower Mississippi, lay seemingly unprotected on the other. Of the Confederate army of the West, part had been captured, part was retreating before the large and well-appointed army of Buell, and part was shut up in fortified works on the left (or eastern) bank of the upper Mississippi, whose capture was only a question of time, now that by the fall of the forts on the Cumberland and Tennessee rivers, they were cut off from supports and supplies.

General Grant was naturally the hero of the hour, and this he deserved to be. His course throughout this whole expedition shows him to have been in every way equal to his task. He did all that could be done at Fort Henry; the retreat of the main body of the Confederates to Fort Donelson could not have been prevented. He moved to Fort Donelson as soon as the fleet was ready to co-operate; and, once there, with a discretion which on similar occasions afterwards he did not always show, he did not waste the strength of his troops by assaulting the unbroken and well-manned fortifications of his antagonists. He had good cause to rely on the gunboats to render the fort untenable, and he kept his troops in their lines. His absence from the conflict

of the 15th was no fault of his. On his return, he had reason enough to be depressed, but he concealed his feelings from his men. He moreover did precisely what he ought to have done in the circumstances. He correctly divined that the Confederates had weakened their lines on their right, and he at once ordered Smith to attack, though he did not expect much from his attack. He saw that the enemy had fallen back to their works on their left, and he directed that our original positions in front of their left should be immediately reoccupied. He could have done no more.

Then fortune favored him, as she has favored most successful generals. Smith carried by assault the key to the enemy's position. The Confederates, demoralized by returning after their successful battle to their lines of the morning, thought of nothing but surrender. They determined to offer no further resistance. They asked for terms of capitulation. Grant instantly saw his advantage. It is possible that, as Smith's adjutant-general states,¹ Grant, in his letter to Buckner, employed the very words of which Smith, to whom the officer from the fort first addressed himself, had just made use; but there was no more forcible language which could have been employed, and if Grant did borrow it, he did well to do so. But whether he did or not is of no consequence. He showed unmistakably that he was ready for victory, prepared to accept the results of success,—no matter how complete that success might be. He was again equal to the situation;

¹ Colonel Newsham; *Magazine of American History*, January, 1886, 41.

and he deserved the praise which he received from the public, and the promotion which President Lincoln at once bestowed on him.¹

At the same time, it is apparent that the task which General Grant had so successfully accomplished was not one of those which call for the highest and rarest qualities of generalship. His work was laid out for him by Halleck, upon whose shoulders rested the responsibility of deciding whether or not the task was feasible, and, if feasible, whether it was wise to attempt it at that time.² Grant had simply to carry out Halleck's orders to the best of his ability. His position did not call for the exercise of discretion, that is, to any great extent. Nor was he placed at any time in a situation of unusual peril or difficulty. But he certainly showed himself equal to all the demands which were made upon him.

The brief campaign which we have just narrated had indeed resulted most successfully for the Union arms, but it must not be supposed that its prosecution was unattended with the risk of defeat. General Halleck, it will be remembered, had begun operations without any authority from General

¹ See Johnston, 476.

² It has been claimed for Grant (1 Badeau, 33) that he suggested to Halleck the movement on Fort Donelson. But while it is true that Halleck's original order (7 W. R., 121) was confined to the capture of Fort Henry, we know that Halleck had, before issuing it, intended a movement on Fort Donelson, and we think it altogether probable that Grant understood that this operation was to follow the reduction of Fort Henry. See Halleck to Buell, 7 W. R., 574, 578. Grant's intention at first was to destroy Fort Donelson, and return to Fort Henry, unless he should find that he could occupy the former place with a small force, rather as a sort "of an advance grand-guard than as a permanent post"; 7 W. R., 124, 125.

McClellan or any understanding with General Buell as to either reinforcements or co-operative movements.¹ When Buell first heard of Halleck's project, as far back as January 31st, he asked him if he needed "active co-operation."² Halleck replied on February 1st that at that moment it was not essential,³ and, on the 2d, he stated to Buell that the garrison of Fort Henry was 6000 men.⁴ On the 3d, Buell informed him that 10,000 men under Floyd and Buckner had just left Bowling Green, and that he had better count on meeting this additional force.⁵ This news, which was substantially correct,⁶ alarmed Halleck. On the 5th he asked Buell to make a diversion in his favor by threatening Bowling Green.⁷ But this Buell could not do. His main army was forty miles from Bowling Green; the roads leading to it were obstructed for nearly the whole distance; and the place itself was behind a river and was strongly fortified. All the roads in that region were in very bad condition, so that any attempt to flank Johnston out of his lines at Bowling Green would inevitably consume many days. Buell, of course, could advance in force on Bowling Green, and either attack or turn the place, but the situation was one which did not render a mere demonstration practicable.⁸ He therefore offered Halleck one of his brigades⁹ and placed at his disposal

¹ *Ante*, 7, 8.

⁵ *Ib.*, 580.

² 7 W. R., 574.

⁶ *Ante*, 18, 19. The number was really 12,000.

³ *Ib.*, 576.

⁷ 7 W. R., 583.

⁴ *Ib.*, 578, 579.

⁸ *Ib.*, 583, 584.

⁹ *Ib.*, 584. This brigade, Cruft's, arrived in time to take part in the capture of Fort Donelson. *Ib.*, 243, 461.

eight new regiments then in Indiana and Ohio.¹ Buell was clearly of opinion that the thing for him to do at this moment was to advance in force on Bowling Green, but he was still under orders to invade East Tennessee. Accordingly, on the 5th, he wrote to the General-in-chief, stating his conviction that the East Tennessee movement ought to be indefinitely postponed and an advance on Bowling Green made at once.² McClellan evidently had not contemplated this, for we find him about this time urging Buell "to delay the move on East Tennessee as little as possible."³ But the repeated and urgent appeals which Halleck was now making for reinforcements,⁴ and the deliberate opinion of Buell as to the importance of an immediate advance on Bowling Green, finally had their effect on McClellan; he consented to postpone the invasion of East Tennessee; and thenceforward he did all in his power to co-ordinate the operations of the forces under Halleck and Buell, with the hope of carrying through to a successful termination the "move," which, to use the language of Buell, "right in its strategical bearing, but commenced by General Halleck without appreciation, preparation, or concert, had now become of vast magnitude."⁵ The varying aspects of the military situation from time to time during the siege of Fort Donelson, and the views of the three generals as to the proper steps to be taken at each juncture, may well detain us a few moments.

General Halleck, as soon as he was informed by

¹ 7 W. R., 588.

² *Ib.*, 586; February 6, 1862.

³ *Ib.*, 585.

⁴ *Ib.*, 583, 591, 594, 599, 612.

⁵ *Ib.*, 587.

Buell that 10,000 men had been sent from Bowling Green to oppose Grant at Fort Henry, not only (as we have seen) asked Buell to make a demonstration in his favor, but telegraphed directly to the General-in-chief for reinforcements.¹ McClellan, who had at the moment no troops to spare,² inclined to the course which Halleck had advocated in his letter of January 20th,³ namely, the transfer to the Cumberland and Tennessee rivers of all of Buell's troops not required to secure his present position. "Had we not better," he wrote to Buell, on February 6th,⁴ "throw all available force on Forts Henry and Donelson? What think you of making that the main line of operations? . . . Ought you not to go in person?"

Buell, in his reply the next day,⁵ said that he had himself been thinking of changing his line of operations to support Grant's movement. "But," said he, the change "will have to be made in the face of 50,000, if not 60,000, men, and is hazardous." This was an overestimate of the force at Johnston's disposal, which could not have much exceeded 40,000 men.⁶ Buell himself had 43,000 infantry and twenty-two batteries fit for duty and nearly 30,000 more infantry under arms and in the field, although uninstructed.⁷ But though an overestimate, it was not an excessive one. Buell relied mainly on his dis-

¹ 7 W. R., 583, 584, 586, 587.

² *Ib.*, 584.

³ *Ante*, 6; 8 W. R., 510.

⁴ 7 W. R., 587.

⁵ *Ib.*, 587, 588.

⁶ There were some 18,000 at Donelson, 14,000 at Bowling Green, some 6000 under Crittenden in Southeastern Kentucky, besides some troops at Nashville and other places.

⁷ 7 W. R., 563, 611, 615, 616.

ciplined troops, of which he had perhaps 45,000. Johnston could have concentrated a force of nearly 40,000 men to resist an advance, or to interfere with or take advantage of any operation undertaken by Buell. If Buell should send 30,000 men to the Cumberland, it might be possible for Johnston, in case Fort Donelson should be found too strong to be carried by assault and more than a match for the Federal ships of war, to reunite his forces, take the offensive, and thus arouse the Confederate sympathizers in Kentucky, the people of which State were, as we know, very evenly divided in sentiment. The presence of a large United States army in the State unquestionably had a strong influence in favor of the cause of the Union, and this influence it was very important to preserve unimpaired. On the other hand, no one was more convinced than General Buell that the operation which General Halleck had begun was one of first-rate importance. He saw clearly the immense results of success and the disastrous consequences of failure. What he wanted to do was to keep his own army intact,—a thing always of great military importance, tending, as it does, so powerfully to create an *esprit de corps*, as well as to ensure the perfecting of the details of organization and administration, but especially important in the outset of the career of an army formed, as was this one, entirely of volunteers. Then Buell desired to advance on Bowling Green and Nashville, leaving it to Halleck to sustain the movement up the rivers. But he was entirely ready to deplete his own army, if it should be necessary to do so, in order

to secure the success of Grant's expedition. He was not a man of quick decision, and he took some days to think over the situation and decide what was best to be done, meantime sending one brigade (Cruft's) to Grant, and placing at Halleck's disposal the eight raw regiments in Ohio and Indiana.¹

While Buell was considering the advisability of this change in his line of operations, Fort Henry was taken on February 6th. Halleck the next day wrote to McClellan,² urgently renewing his proposition. "It is said that the enemy is concentrating troops by railroad to recover his lost advantage. If General Buell cannot either attack or threaten Bowling Green on account of the roads, I think every man not required to defend Green River³ should be sent to the Tennessee River or Cumberland River. . . . The enemy must abandon Bowling Green. . . . He ought to concentrate at Dover and attempt to retake Fort Henry. It is the only way he can restore an equilibrium. We should be prepared for this. If you agree with me, send me everything you can spare from General Buell's command, or elsewhere." To the same effect, and in nearly the same words Halleck wrote on the same day to Buell, adding that he had only 15,000 men at Fort Henry and Dover.⁴ On the 8th Halleck again urged his suggestion on the General-in-chief.⁵

¹ *Ante*, 38, 39.

² 7 W. R., 590, 591.

³ Buell's line of defence. *Ante*, 7, n. 1.

⁴ 7 W. R., 592. Cruft's brigade had not yet arrived, nor the eight raw regiments from Ohio and Indiana. *Ib.*, 597, 600. Cruft's brigade left on the 7th (592) and arrived on the 11th (612).

⁵ *Ib.*, 594.

It was, in fact, not until after the fall of Fort Henry that General Halleck saw the full danger attending his inconsiderate move. He had sent Grant to Fort Henry, with instructions also to capture Fort Donelson, and he had given him only 15,000 men, for these were all he could dispose of. Fort Henry had proved an easy capture indeed; but it was certain that a formidable resistance was to be expected at Fort Donelson; and Halleck now saw, apparently for the first time, that it was perfectly practicable for Johnston to send troops from Bowling Green to Clarksville or Nashville by rail, and thence by steamer to Fort Donelson or Dover, in such numbers as he might think sufficient, and, furthermore, that this was what Johnston ought to do, and probably would do.¹ He also saw that such a force might very possibly crush Grant by superior numbers and return to Bowling Green, before Buell, hindered, as he was, by the bad roads and the unfordable rivers, could carry that fortified place by siege or storm, or flank the Confederates out of it.² Hence he was exceedingly and justifiably anxious as to the fate of his expedition. He had no troops in his own Department,—at least, this was his own opinion,—which he could spare for Grant's support. He could only ask McClellan and Buell for assistance; but to what extent or in what way that assistance would be furnished, it would probably be left for Buell, who possessed McClellan's full confidence, to decide. Halleck had neglected to take the precaution to have a definite understanding with Buell;

¹ 7 W. R., 590-593.² *Ib.*, 627, 628.

and, though he knew that Buell would do all in his power to help him, he could not tell what course Buell, who would naturally be largely influenced by the needs, real or supposed, of his own Department, would deem it wisest to take. He was now thoroughly alarmed lest Johnston, who was, as he knew, secure in his works at Bowling Green from any sudden attack by Buell, should concentrate a large force at Dover, and overwhelm Grant.

The General-in-chief evidently leaned to Halleck's opinion, while retaining the greatest respect for Buell's military judgment. He again (on February 7th) urged Buell "to take the line of the Tennessee with" his "command and operate on Nashville."¹

But General Buell could not at first bring himself to agree with the General-in-chief and General Halleck. He telegraphed the former on the 7th² that, "on reflection," he could not think a change of his line would be advisable. He added, however, "I will go, if necessary." The next day he wrote³: "I am concentrating and preparing, but will not decide definitely yet." On the 12th Buell wrote to Halleck that he was "advancing in some force on Bowling Green, and preparing the rest of" his "force for either alternative."⁴ In reply Halleck wrote him⁵ that it was reported that 40,000 rebels were at Dover and Clarksville. This report seems to have decided Buell. He telegraphed to Halleck and McClellan the same day⁶ (the 12th) that he would

¹ 7 W. R., 593. Nashville is on the Cumberland, but the troops under Grant were at this time at Fort Henry on the Tennessee.

² *Ib.*, 593.

⁴ *Ib.*, 607.

³ *Ib.*, 594.

⁵ *Ib.*, 607.

⁶ *Ib.*, 607, 938.

“move on the line of the Cumberland River or Tennessee River.” Three days later he decided to take two divisions,—say 16,000 to 20,000 men,—to the Cumberland River,¹ “leaving the rest of the army to operate against Bowling Green.”²

It may well be that this plan of General Buell's was a judicious one, but it certainly would seem that it was not adopted with that promptitude which the exigency called for. General Buell was on February 7th fully aware that Grant's force consisted only of 15,000 men, with the addition of the brigade (Cruft's) sent from his (Buell's) army and the raw troops from Ohio and Indiana; and he also knew that it was perfectly feasible for Johnston to concentrate at or near Fort Donelson a force largely superior to that of Grant in numbers and efficiency. He himself was not at the moment employing his own army; he was not threatened with a forward movement on the part of the Confederates; nor could he advance on their position at Bowling Green without great difficulty and some delay. Moreover, if Fort Donelson should be taken, Bowling Green would in all probability be evacuated. This was Buell's own opinion.³ Under these circumstances, therefore, it would certainly seem that one or perhaps two divisions should have been despatched at once to the critical point, Fort Donelson, to render certain beyond a reasonable question the success of the movement upon which depended in all probability the evacuation of Bowling Green and Nashville. That this was Buell's own opinion of the true course for

¹ 7 W. R., 619-621.² *Ib.*, 938.³ *Ib.*, 936.

him to pursue is shown by the fact that it was the one which he did, on February 12th, adopt, and, four days later, partially carry into execution. But there seems to have been no good reason why it might not have been adopted on the 7th, and carried at once into execution.

While General Buell was thus getting ready to start for the Cumberland River with two divisions, he learned that Bowling Green had been evacuated.¹ He immediately decided that one division would now suffice for the assistance of Grant, and that he ought to march at once on Nashville himself with the remainder of his army.² Nelson's division was accordingly embarked on the 16th for Fort Donelson.³ Buell on the 15th wrote to McClellan and Halleck, communicating his decision.⁴ Halleck considered his course bad strategy⁵; but Buell held that an immediate march on Nashville, which was now made possible by the fall of Bowling Green, would be certain to relieve the pressure on Grant at Donelson⁶; and McClellan concurred with him.⁷ There can be no question that McClellan and Buell were correct in their judgment. Grant by this time had, or would shortly have, when Nelson's division should arrive, a force quite sufficient for his needs.⁸ Buell, on the other hand, supposed, naturally, that he had before him the bulk of Johnston's army; and there was no

¹ 7 W. R., 616.

² It was finally found that it was better to send Thomas's division to Nashville by water. *Ib.*, 651.

³ *Ib.*, 621.

⁶ *Ib.*, 620.

⁴ *Ib.*, 619-621.

⁷ *Ib.*, 617, 620, 625.

⁵ *Ib.*, 617, 621, 624.

⁸ *Ib.*, 620; Buell to McClellan.

reason to think that the troops which Johnston had detached to defend Fort Donelson would not be able ultimately to effect a junction with the main body, whatever might become of the fort. Buell expected, moreover, that Johnston's army would be largely reinforced at Nashville by troops from the Gulf States and perhaps from Virginia, and that the city would be stoutly defended.¹ Hence he desired to carry with him as large a force as possible.

On the 16th of February Fort Donelson fell, and the bulk of the Confederate troops which had defended it were made prisoners of war.² Buell's advance had just reached Bowling Green.³ It would take about a week for Buell's army to march to Nashville. Halleck, however, had 30,000 men under Grant at Fort Donelson, and there was water-communication with Nashville the whole way. But Halleck had no scheme in his mind. "I have," he wrote to McClellan, the day before the fort surrendered, "no definite plan beyond the taking of Fort Donelson and Clarksville."⁴ McClellan replied at once by directing him to move on Nashville by the quickest route.⁵ McClellan saw that the Confederates had received a terrible blow by the capture of Donelson, and that active pursuit of Johnston's army was the right policy at this juncture. He also saw that the hold of the enemy on the Mississippi River had now become extremely

¹ 7 W. R., 630; see also Lincoln to Halleck, *ib.*, 624.

² *ib.*, 625.

³ *ib.*, 627.

⁴ *ib.*, 616. Clarksville is on the Cumberland, about half-way to Nashville.

⁵ *ib.*, 625.

precarious, and that, in all probability, Columbus would very soon be abandoned.¹

Halleck, on the contrary, entirely misconceived the military situation. He was absolutely blind to the ruinous consequences which the disaster of Donelson entailed on the Confederates. He thought that Beauregard, who had taken charge of the Confederate operations on the Mississippi, instead of contemplating the speedy evacuation of Columbus, had designs on Cairo and Paducah, and perhaps on Fort Henry.² Hence, instead of moving on Nashville, as he had been directed to do, he retained Grant at Donelson, and ordered all the gunboats but one back to Cairo.³ Foote, indeed, on the 19th, captured Clarksville without resistance,⁴ and Grant sent Smith's division there a day or two afterwards,⁵ but this was all. Both these officers desired to push on to Nashville,⁶ but Halleck would not take the responsibility. He wanted Buell to march on Clarksville, and to move thence on Nashville.⁷ He wrote indeed to Scott, the Assistant Secretary of War, that if he would "divide the responsibility" with him—a most singular proposition for a general to make,—he would "go ahead."⁸ This was on February 21st. On the 23d, however, he went so far as to order Foote to send all his available gunboats to Clarksville, and Grant to concentrate 20,000 men at the same place, and all other troops (except garrisons to be left for the two forts) in the immediate

¹ 7 W. R., 640.

² *Ib.*, 627-629, 632, 633, 635-637.

³ *Ib.*, 633.

⁴ *Ib.*, 422.

⁵ *Ib.*, 423.

⁶ *Ib.*, 648.

⁷ *Ib.*, 642.

⁸ *Ib.*, 648.

neighborhood, "prepared for a movement up the Cumberland," and for "a great and decisive contest."¹ But the next day, when Halleck learned that Nashville had been abandoned by the enemy, he at once countermanded his orders to Foote and Grant, directed that transports should be collected at Paducah, and that all his troops should be withdrawn from the Cumberland and "made ready for the field,"² that is, for operations on the Tennessee.³

It is not an easy task to follow the movements of General Halleck's mind during the ten days which succeeded the fall of Fort Donelson. It would seem that he was so apprehensive of an attack by Beauregard from Columbus upon Cairo and Paducah that he did not dare to risk a collision with Johnston at Nashville by sending Grant at once to that city. He was, instead, actually afraid of an attack upon Grant after the fall of Donelson by a force coming from Nashville,⁴ although he kept him at Dover and Clarksville till Buell had occupied Nashville. How far these fears of his, as expressed in his letters, were genuine, and how far they were only put forward as excuses for his inaction, it is hard to say. One thing is certain, that he did not do what McClellan expected and told him to do, and that was, to proceed to occupy Nashville without delay after the fall of Fort Donelson. Had he done so he would certainly have had every chance of winning, with the force under Grant, another considerable success, for Johnston's army was largely inferior to that of Grant,

¹ 7 W. R., 655.

² *Ib.*, 661, 667.

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³ *Ib.*, 671, 672, 674.

⁴ *Ib.*, 627.

both in numbers and *moral*. Why he refrained from ordering Grant forward, it is hard to say, but it is not impossible that Halleck was unwilling to take any course which might have the result of merging (even for a time) any considerable portion of his own army in that of Buell, and thus of giving to that officer such a large command that the Government would naturally look to him to take the next important step in the campaign.

What General Halleck had always wanted, it must be remembered, was that Buell's army should be sent to him. During the progress of the events which we have narrated, he was continually besieging the General-in-chief and the War Department with his applications to be given the chief command in the West. "Give it to me," he wrote on February 19th,¹ "and I will split secession in twain in one month." "I must," said he on the 20th, "have command of the armies in the West."² The next day he is even more emphatic. "One whole week," he writes to the Secretary of War,³ "has been lost already by hesitation and delay. There was, and I think there still is, a golden opportunity to strike a fatal blow, but I can't do it unless I can control Buell's army. There is not a moment to be lost. Give me authority, and I will be responsible for results." But to this request the Government would not accede,⁴ and Halleck had to submit to its decision.⁵ One cannot help being struck by the con-

¹ 7 W. R., 636 ; *cf.* 595.

² *Ib.*, 641.

³ *Ib.*, 655. The true date of this despatch is February 21.

⁴ *Ib.*, 652.

⁵ *Ib.*, 660.

trast between the confident tone of these demands, and the strain of apprehension and uncertainty which runs through his ordinary correspondence with Stanton and McClellan. If he had any well-matured and specific project for crushing the Confederate power in the West, he certainly failed in conveying the impression that such was the fact.

General Buell's advance on Nashville was made with the greatest energy and boldness. He did not wait to concentrate his army, but pushed forward with Mitchel's division alone. When he reached the Cumberland, opposite Nashville, on the evening of February 24th, he found that Nelson, who had come up the river from Donelson, where he was no longer needed, had occupied the place. Mitchel's division was at once sent across, and positions were taken on the outskirts of the city.¹ Buell had with him 18,000 men and 36 guns,² but as his other divisions were some days in the rear, and the strength of the enemy under Johnston, who had fallen back to Murfreesborough, was estimated at 30,000 men,³ he sent for C. F. Smith, who was at Clarksville, to come forward to Nashville.⁴ When McCook and Wood of Buell's army arrived on March 1st, Smith's division was returned to Halleck's command.⁵ The three divisions of Mitchel, McCook, and Wood had been pushed forward without transportation and baggage,⁶ and some days were required to equip them for further operations.⁷ Thomas's division

¹ 7 W. R., 425.

⁴ *Ib.*, 944.

² *Ib.*, 945.

⁵ *Ib.*, 675.

³ *Ib.*, 425.

⁶ 11 W. R., 10, 11.

⁷ Scott to Stanton, 7 W. R., 680.

came by water somewhat later. On the 10th of March, Buell wrote to Halleck that he would be able to advance in a few days, as soon as his transportation was ready.¹

General Grant had at this time under his command at Forts Henry and Donelson and at Clarksville, including the troops embarked for operations on the Tennessee, nearly 40,000 men, with 54 guns.²

The army under General Buell consisted at this time of about 50,000 men, with a proper complement of artillery, exclusive of the detachments in the eastern districts of Kentucky and Tennessee.³

It was a great misfortune for the Union cause that these forces, or a part of them, could not have been sent at once in pursuit of Johnston's army, which numbered less than 20,000 men,⁴ and had presumably become much discouraged by the reverses it had suffered. It is impossible to overrate the effect which the destruction of this army would have had on the Confederate cause in the West.⁵ But the condition of the roads and streams convinced both the Federal generals that it was impracticable to undertake the task of following up the army of Johnston. "A pursuit," says General Buell, "with the hope of overtaking it [Johnston's army] on its line of march, would have been futile, . . . even if the force had been up [*sic*] to commence it at once, for every stream was flooded, and every bridge was destroyed as the enemy retired. The only

¹ 11 W. R., 27.

² *Ib.*, 37; *cf.* 148.

³ *Ib.*, 21.

⁴ 7 W. R., 427.

⁵ See letter from Scott, Assistant Secretary of War, to McClellan, February 23, 1862: 7 W. R., 656.

alternative was to operate deliberately against some line or point which it was his object to defend, and the Memphis and Charleston Railroad presented such an object. It was the same for the forces that were operating up the Tennessee River under the orders of Major-General Halleck, more especially against the enemy's forces, that, by the recent operations, had been compelled to evacuate the principal part of West Tennessee."¹ This last remark refers to those Confederate troops which had been rendered available for field service by the abandonment of Columbus on the 2d of March, a step which was decided on as soon as Fort Donelson had fallen, and which was successfully carried out by General Polk by order of General Beauregard, who now commanded (under General Johnston) the Confederate forces on the Mississippi.

The Memphis and Charleston Railroad ran almost due east from Memphis to Chattanooga, through the towns of Corinth, Iuka, Tusculum, Decatur, Stevenson, and Bridgeport. At Corinth it was intersected by a railroad which ran northwest from the interior of the State of Mississippi, through Jackson and Humboldt in Tennessee, to the neighborhood of Island No. 10 and New Madrid, where the Confederates had strong works, by which they trusted to close the Mississippi River to the Federal fleet. At this time these works were under siege by a Federal force under General Pope. It was, therefore, certain that the Confederates would make special efforts to defend Corinth; not only

¹ 22 W. R., 28.

because it was a point on the direct route to Memphis, but also because the railroad which supplied their posts and troops on the east side of the Mississippi ran through the town. Moreover, it was soon known that Johnston had retired south from Murfreesborough across the Tennessee River, and it was naturally supposed that he intended to unite his forces with those of Beauregard, by sending them west along the Memphis and Charleston Railroad; and the occupation of Corinth in force by the Federals would it was believed, hinder or prevent this junction.

It is interesting to see how differently the two Union commanders viewed the military situation.

Buell, bearing in mind that the Tennessee River, controlled, as it was, by the Federal gunboats, constituted from its mouth to Florence in Alabama an almost perfect line of defence to the Union armies operating in Kentucky and Tennessee against any attack from the west, was of opinion that the whole available force under his own command and that of General Halleck, should be assembled at some point on its easterly side, "as high up as possible,"¹ that a crossing of the combined armies should be made there, and the Memphis and Charleston Railroad seized. Florence was the place which he preferred as the point of crossing.² He thought it certain that in that case the enemy's principal force would be encountered, and that Island No. 10 and New Madrid would be abandoned at once.

Halleck, on the other hand, about the 1st of

¹ 11 W. R., 27.

² *Ib.*, 10, 23, 38, 39.

March, organized an expedition of about 35,000 men¹ which should go up the Tennessee, and, landing on its west side, should break up the railroads, burn the bridges, and generally interfere with the communications of the Confederate armies. His orders to Grant,² to whom he at first entrusted the command of this column, were in very general terms, but they enjoined on that officer that he should "avoid any general engagement with strong forces," and that, after having accomplished the objects of the expedition, or such of them as might be practicable, he should return by water to Danville, a place some twenty miles above Fort Henry, and then move out to Paris, a town in Tennessee, about thirty miles west of the Tennessee River. It is evident that, at that time, Halleck thought that the situation demanded nothing more important from him than a raid on the enemy's communications west of the Tennessee River, and that he intended that the expeditionary force should finally remain on that side of the river.

Owing to a temporary misunderstanding between Halleck and Grant, the command of the expedition was entrusted at first to C. F. Smith. But that excellent officer met with a serious accident early in March, from the effects of which he never recovered; and Grant resumed command of the forces on March 17th.³ Smith, however, had, before he left the field,⁴ selected a place for a camp on the west side of the river, and had stationed some troops there. The

¹ 11 W. R., 20, 21.

² 11 W. R., 42.

³ 7 W. R., 674.

⁴ *Ib.*, 25, 45.

place was known as Pittsburg Landing.¹ It was situated about twenty miles north of Corinth, and about nine miles above Savannah, a small town on the other (east) bank of the river. Savannah is some ninety miles above Fort Henry. The selection was well made, as the position was naturally a strong one, protected on its flanks by the river and by deep creeks, and capable of being made well-nigh impregnable to assault.² But there was no possibility of retreat from it. The Tennessee was at this time very high, overflowing its banks. No bridge could be thrown across it.³ In the rear of the position were deep and muddy creeks which were practically impassable. For the purposes of a temporary occupation the place would answer well enough; but unless it should be strengthened by intrenchments it was the height of rashness to make of it a permanent camp. That it was necessary to fix temporarily upon some such point on the west side of the Tennessee in order to carry out the purposes of the expedition may very likely be true, but that it was necessary or expedient to remain there, as General Grant did, after it had been ascertained that the purposes of the expedition could not be accomplished, may well be doubted. And it was soon found that the objects prescribed to Grant in Halleck's order could not be attained. The columns sent out under Wallace and Sherman found the roads impracticable and the enemy in considerable

¹ See Map II., facing page 90.

² Johnston, 531; Force, 101; 10 W. R., 27.

³ 11 W. R., 45.

force, and were obliged to return to Pittsburg Landing without having accomplished anything.¹ Yet Grant, without objection from Halleck, retained the troops at the Landing. By the first of April his force there had increased to about 45,000 men.² He, nevertheless, established his own headquarters at Savannah, which place was, as has just been stated, some nine miles north of Pittsburg Landing, and on the east side of the river. He gave to General Sherman the command of all the troops at the Landing, except those belonging to the division of McClelland.³ The whole arrangement was manifestly faulty, and indicated great recklessness on the part of General Grant, who was perfectly aware that the enemy in very considerable force—estimated at from 50,000 to 80,000 men—were at no great distance.⁴ No works of any kind were thrown up, although Halleck had ordered him to fortify his position,⁵ nor was any line of defence, or of battle, determined on.⁶ The various camps were established with reference to the convenience of the different commanders, and without any pretence to system. There were no cavalry pickets posted between the camp and Corinth. All the well-known maxims of war, applicable to such a

¹ 10 W. R., 8-29, 83-86.

² *Ib.*, 112. That is, this was the nominal force.

³ 11 W. R., 43.

⁴ 10 W. R., 8; 11 W. R., 47, 49, 55, 62, 93, 94.

⁵ 11 W. R., 51.

⁶ Grant says that his engineer-officer, McPherson, "was directed to lay out a line to intrench, but reported that it would have to be made in rear of the line of encampment."—1 Grant, 332. But such a line would have been invaluable on the day of battle. On the reasons afterwards given by Grant and Sherman for their neglect to fortify the position, see Note 1, at the end of this chapter.

position, were absolutely unheeded by General Grant. Probably there never was an army encamped in an enemy's country with so little regard to the manifest risks which are inseparable from such a situation.

Meanwhile General Halleck had at last been appointed to the sole command of the United States forces in the West.¹ When McClellan began active operations with the Army of the Potomac he was, as we have seen,² relieved of the command of all the armies of the North, and restricted to the control of his own army. General Halleck's Department extended from Knoxville in East Tennessee to and beyond the west side of the Mississippi River, and General Buell was placed under him. This was a natural appointment for the Government to make, inasmuch as the recent successes had mostly been obtained by troops in Halleck's command, or had followed naturally from those successes. Yet it was a very unfit appointment, for Halleck, though he had been educated at West Point, and had even written a book on the art of war, had had no experience in the field, having passed most of his life out of the army, and, what was of more importance, he had little natural aptitude for military affairs. He was, moreover, careless, indolent, and inexact to a degree hardly to be credited.

Halleck's conduct of the vitally important interests at this time under his sole control, exhibit his defects in the most striking manner. It was by his permission that Grant, with upwards of 40,000 men,

¹ 11 W. R., 28; March 11, 1862.

² *Ante*, Part I., 255.

was encamped at Pittsburg Landing, in a position from which there was, in case of disaster, no possibility of retreat. It was due to his negligence that this position was not intrenched, for only once did he allude in his letters to Grant to the necessity of taking this obvious precaution. The truth was, he never appreciated the gravity of the situation. He indeed ordered Buell to direct his march on Savannah,¹ but he never considered, still less did he ever intimate to Buell, that the army under Grant at Pittsburg Landing was in peril until the troops coming from Nashville should have joined it. He counted with easy assurance on the enemy's remaining on the defensive until he should get his two armies united, and should be ready to advance on Corinth.² To the danger to which the army under Grant was exposed, of being overwhelmed by the entire force of the enemy before the army under Buell could possibly arrive to its assistance, Halleck was absolutely blind.

In reality, that danger was imminent. The Confederates had rallied from the shock of the capture of Fort Donelson and the abandonment of middle Tennessee with wonderful courage and vigor. Johnston himself saw clearly that nothing but a successful battle³ could restore the prestige of the Confederacy and recover the territory which had been lost, and he believed that a successful battle could be fought. He determined without hesitation⁴ on an aggressive policy. In President Davis he had

¹ 11 W. R., 42, 44, 77.

² *Ib.*, 77.

³ Johnston, 514, 515.

⁴ Johnston to Davis, February 25, 1862; 7 W. R., 426, 427.

a strong and steady supporter.¹ In General Beauregard he found an able and zealous coadjutor. The course to be pursued at first, at any rate, was plain. It was to unite the remains of the army of Johnston to the troops on and near the Mississippi, at that time under the immediate command of Beauregard, and to add to these troops such reinforcements as could be procured from other parts of the Confederacy. It was to be expected on general principles that the Federal generals would cross the Tennessee somewhere with the object of seizing some important point on the Memphis and Charleston Railroad, and it was hoped that in this way an opportunity would be presented for a sudden and fierce attack upon the Union forces by an army of considerable magnitude, led by able and determined men, and animated by a resolute and daring spirit. This opportunity had now offered itself. There was the army of Grant at Pittsburg Landing, and there was the army of Buell marching to join it. It was plain that the thing to do was to strike Grant before Buell could arrive. This seemed, and really was, a perfectly feasible thing to do. The wonder is, that it never should have occurred either to Halleck or Grant that the Confederate generals, to whom the facts were perfectly known, would be sure to make the attempt.

The army of Johnston, or, rather, what remained of it after the surrender of Donelson, retired, as we have seen, from Nashville to Murfreesborough.² Thence it marched south over terribly bad roads

¹ Davis to Johnston, 11 W. R., 365 ; Johnston, 512.

² *Ante*, 51.

and across swollen streams until Decatur in Alabama was reached. Here, about the middle of March, the Tennessee River was crossed. From Decatur the march was resumed in a westerly direction, and the head of the column reached Corinth in Mississippi about the 18th.¹ Johnston carried with him 20,000 men.² About the same time a force of some 10,000 men, under command of General Bragg, arrived at Corinth from Pensacola and New Orleans.³ To the same point also, Beauregard directed the troops under Polk, which, after the evacuation of Columbus, had been stationed at Humboldt and Jackson. Some days were necessarily consumed in organizing these troops, a large part of whom were in a poor state of discipline.⁴ On the 29th of March Johnston formally assumed command of these forces, to which he gave the name of "The Army of the Mississippi."⁵ He appointed Bragg, whose reputation as an organizer and disciplinarian stood very high, his chief-of-staff, and he announced that Beauregard was second in command.⁶ He divided his army into three corps, placing them under Polk, Bragg, and Hardee respectively. There was, besides, a reserve division of infantry, placed at first under Crittenden, but afterwards under Breckinridge, who had been, in Buchanan's time, Vice-President of the United States. The whole force numbered (exclusive of the sick and of men on extra duty and in arrest) nearly 40,000 men, of whom 35,000 were infantry,

¹ 7 W. R., 259. ³ 11 W. R., 339.

² *Ib.*, 261.

⁴ *Ib.*, 340; Johnston, 548.

⁵ 11 W. R., 370.

⁶ Johnston actually offered Beauregard the chief command, but Beauregard declined to accept it. Johnston, 549, 550; 1 Beauregard, 266.

and the rest cavalry and artillery.¹ There were about 100 guns. This comprised all the troops that could be concentrated for battle in the Department after providing for the holding of East Tennessee, and for the protection of the communications. The spirit of the army was, on the whole, good,—at any rate for an aggressive movement. Recent events, of course, must have had a depressing effect on the soldiers of Johnston and Polk, but they were anxious to be led against their foes, and were unmistakably in the mood for battle. They all took in the situation perfectly; they saw clearly the rare opportunity before them of achieving a capital success in striking Grant before Buell could join him. The Confederate army was well led. Johnston was generally admitted to be one of the finest officers in the service. The corps-commanders were graduates of West Point, and were men of capacity. Bragg subsequently commanded this army, and although he was not a successful strategist, he was in many respects a good general. Breckinridge was a civilian, but he was known as a gallant and efficient officer.

The important thing was to move at once,—before any of Buell's troops should be able to reach Pittsburg Landing,—but the inexperience of both officers and men was so great, and the different bodies composing the army had so recently been brought together, that the prompt action which had been hoped for was not obtained.² It was not until April 3d that the orders were issued for the advance from Corinth to Pittsburg Landing.³ Johnston's original

¹ 10 W. R., 398.² 1 Beauregard, 326.³ 10 W. R., 392.

plan was that Polk's corps should constitute the left wing, Hardee's the centre, and Bragg's the right wing of the army, with Breckinridge's division in reserve.¹ But he finally concluded to leave the matter of the disposition of the troops to Beauregard, and that officer directed that, in making the attack, the three corps should advance in line, one behind the other. Hardee's corps, with a brigade from Bragg's, was to constitute the first line, the remainder of Bragg's corps the second line, and Polk's corps, with Breckinridge's division, the third.² This unusual tactical arrangement was found to be inconvenient for many reasons; the corps-commanders, for instance, could not possibly oversee the movements of their troops as well as if the front of each command were less extended, and the chance of the different organizations getting mixed up was obviously greatly increased.³ In fact, about the middle of the day of the battle, it was arranged between the three corps-commanders that Hardee should take charge of the left, Polk of the centre, and Bragg of the right.⁴

Although the distance to be traversed was only twenty miles, and the marching orders were, as we have seen, issued on April 3d, such was the wretched condition of the roads, and so rainy was the weather, that the army did not get into its designated position for the attack until Saturday afternoon, April 5th. During the advance the pickets had some tri-

¹ Johnston to Davis, 11 W. R., 387.

² 10 W. R., 386.

³ Force, 160; but see 1 Beauregard, 328.

⁴ Polk's Report, 10 W. R., 408; 1 Beauregard, 293.

fling encounters with the Federal outposts,¹ and Beauregard could not but believe that the Federal generals must be aware of the proximity of the Confederate army, and that they had constructed at least some defensive works. This consideration, and the more important one, that, as the attack could not be made on the 5th, as originally intended, there was a strong probability that the Confederates would encounter Buell's troops as well as Grant's, induced Beauregard to advise that the plan be given up and the army brought back to Corinth. But to this Johnston would not listen; he had come, and so had the army, for a pitched battle, and to go back without fighting would demoralize his undisciplined troops. Accordingly the orders were given to attack the enemy at daybreak of Sunday, the 6th.²

The Army of the Tennessee, for this had now become the proper designation of the force under General Grant, consisted of six divisions of infantry, those of McClelland, W. H. L. Wallace, Lewis Wallace, Hurlbut, W. T. Sherman, and Prentiss,³ and numbered on paper nearly 45,000 men.⁴ Of these, about 3000 were cavalry. There were more than 100 guns,—over twenty batteries.⁵ All the division generals were men of unquestioned bravery, and perfectly equal to their tasks. Sherman subsequently rose to the command of this army.

¹ 10 W. R., 89-93; 11 W. R., 87, 90.

² Johnston, 567-569; 1 Beauregard, 277-279.

³ 10 W. R., 100-105.

⁴ *Ib.*, 112. The effective force was no doubt much less. Grant places it at 38,000; 1 Grant, 366. Force (180) puts it at about 40,000.

⁵ Force, 113-116.

That part of the Army of the Ohio which, under General Buell, was marching across the country lying between Nashville on the Cumberland and Savannah on the Tennessee to form a junction with the Army of the Tennessee, consisted of five divisions, under Thomas, A. D. McCook, Nelson, Crittenden, and Wood, all excellent officers. These divisions numbered about 37,000 men.¹ They carried with them a full complement of artillery, and a small force of cavalry.

The march from Nashville had been made without other interruption than that occasioned by the enemy's having burned the bridge over Duck River. This caused a delay of some twelve days. The march had been made steadily, but without haste. The troops had covered about fifteen miles a day.² No intimation from Halleck of the desirability of uniting with the force under Grant at the earliest possible moment had been made to Buell, for the excellent reason that Halleck himself was not concerned about Grant's situation, and did not imagine him to be in danger. And, in fact, it was not until his advance had arrived at Columbia that Buell learned,³ and then only from scouts sent him by Grant, that Grant's forces were on the west side of the Tennessee; up to that time he had supposed them to be at Savannah, where Halleck had repeatedly told him that Grant was.⁴ But the information that Grant's forces were on the further side of the river did not arouse any anxiety in Buell's mind, for he was told

¹ 1 Van Horne, 99.

³ 11 W. R., 47, 58.

² Buell in the New York *World* of February 18, 1865.

⁴ *Ib.*, 42, 43.

at the same time¹ that Grant was in a very strong position, and he had a right to suppose that, if the facts were otherwise, he would be duly informed of the actual state of things by Halleck. Had he known Halleck better, he certainly would not have relied so confidently either on his judgment or his carefulness. But Halleck was his superior officer; it was Halleck's business to know whether the force under Grant was safe in its present position, or whether it would not be safe until Buell should join it; and Halleck having never intimated that he had any doubt as to Grant's safety, Buell pursued his march to Savannah with primary regard to the comfort and efficiency of his soldiers. The truth is, that the object of Buell's march, as it was understood both by him and by Halleck, was,—to use Buell's own words, which are very just,—“not to succor General Grant's army, but to form a junction with it for an ulterior offensive campaign.” As he approached Savannah, it occurred to him, and he made the suggestion to Halleck, that it might be well for him to halt, and to concentrate his divisions at Waynesborough, a town some thirty miles from Savannah. From Waynesborough a road runs southwest to a point on the river opposite Hamburg, a town on the west side of the Tennessee some ten miles above Pittsburg Landing. Buell thought it might be best, perhaps, that his force should cross there,² and Halleck at once fell in with

¹ New York *World*, February 18, 1865; 22 W. R., 29.

² Buell's letter to Halleck is not in the War Records. See 1 Van Horne, 102. Buell, in all probability, knew nothing of the estimate which Grant had formed of the strength of the Confederates at Corinth.

this suggestion.¹ Nothing could show more decisively than this how far Halleck was from thinking that Grant's army was in imminent danger. Luckily, however, for the three generals concerned, and for the cause they served, Halleck's reply did not reach Buell until after his troops had passed through Waynesborough on their march to Savannah.

The leading division, Nelson's, arrived at Savannah on Saturday, April 5th, about noon.² Nelson and one of his brigadiers, Ammen, saw General Grant that afternoon. Ammen suggested that the division should cross the river at once, and proceed to Pittsburg Landing. But Grant declined the offer, and promised to send boats for them "Monday or Tuesday, or some time early in the week," remarking, "There will be no fight at Pittsburg Landing; we will have to go to Corinth."³ That day he wrote to Halleck, announcing the arrival of Nelson's division, and added: "I have scarcely the faintest idea of an attack (general one) being made upon us, but will be prepared should such a thing take place."⁴ Yet the very same day he estimated "the number of the enemy at Corinth and within supporting distance of it" to be not "far from 80,000 men."⁵ His own force, as we have seen, was not much more than half that number. One would suppose that he

¹ 11 W. R., 94.

² 10 W. R., 330.

³ *Ib.*, 331.

⁴ *Ib.*, 89. On the 6th, however, Grant wrote to Buell that he had been "looking for" an attack, but did not believe it "could be made before Monday or Tuesday." 109 W. R., 232. If this be so, his lack of preparation on Sunday to receive an attack is very culpable.

⁵ 11 W. R., 94.

would have welcomed the immediate reinforcement of Nelson's division.

Sherman, on whom Grant seems to have relied to attend to matters at the Landing when he himself was in Savannah,¹ though he sent out reconnoitring parties from time to time,² shared to the full the confidence of his chief. "I do not apprehend," wrote he to Grant³ on the 5th, "anything like an attack on our position." Sherman, however, suspected the proximity of small bodies of the enemy.⁴ General Prentiss also, on Saturday evening, sent out a force of ten companies to reconnoitre, and, on the strength of the report of the commanding officer, he despatched at three o'clock the next morning an entire brigade to find out exactly what was the force of the enemy. These troops came in contact with the advance of the Confederate army under Hardee, and about six o'clock were driven back with loss.⁵

For, on this Sunday morning, April 6, 1862, the army of Johnston was pressing forward in line of battle, confident of victory. About seven o'clock the artillery opened fire.⁶ The Union troops, suddenly awakened to the unexpected and unwelcome fact that they were attacked in great force, formed at once in their several camps; but there being no previous understanding for concerted and sustained action, they were for the first few hours practically at the mercy of their antagonists. Their various encampments had been selected without any ref-

¹ I Grant, 334; II W. R., 91, 93, 94.

² *Ib.*, 87.

³ *Ib.*, 93, 94.

⁴ *Ib.*, 93.

⁵ IO W. R., 277, 278.

⁶ *Ib.*, 401.

erence to an emergency like this. The peculiar feature of the battle of Shiloh consisted in the fact that the Union army was not in the least prepared to receive an attack,—that it was not even in order of battle. The resistance therefore which it offered to the advance of the Confederate army was necessarily of a fragmentary and disconnected character,—each body of troops making the best defence it could, often isolated from the other bodies of troops in its vicinity, and therefore exposed to having its flanks turned by the well-supported lines of the Confederate army.¹ Add to this, that for some two or three hours after the battle began there was no commanding general on the ground, and that each division-commander, being naturally absorbed in getting his own troops ready to resist the sudden and formidable assault of the enemy, was obliged to trust to such representations as he could make on the spur of the moment to obtain the supports and connections needed for his flanks and rear. Besides all this, a large part of the troops, particularly in Sherman's and Prentiss's divisions, were absolutely without military experience; they had in fact begun their education as soldiers while in their camps at Pittsburg Landing. At the same time, the Union army was composed of excellent material; there were a great many gallant officers and brave men in its ranks; and the peculiar features of the battlefield, a great part of which was covered with woods, with large cleared spaces between, and which was intersected by deep ravines, afforded many opportu-

¹ Force, 124.

nities of which an army standing on the defensive could avail itself. The course which the battle took was just what might under these conditions have been expected.

The Union army was encamped between the Tennessee River, on which, about two miles south of Pittsburg Landing, the left of the army rested, and Owl Creek, which, at the furthest point occupied, was about three miles west of the river, and which constituted a perfect protection for the right. The army, in a general way, faced south, or, rather, somewhat to the west of south. Three brigades of Sherman's division were on the right of the position,—near and to the westward of Shiloh Church, from which the battle takes its name. Prentiss's division was in the centre,¹ but half a mile distant from these three brigades of Sherman's. Separated from Prentiss by three-fifths of a mile, and resting on the river was another brigade (Stuart's) of Sherman's division.² It was upon these troops, separated by these gaps,³ that the first shock fell. Behind Sherman's division lay McClelland's,—behind Prentiss's was Hurlbut's,—in the rear of these was the division of W. H. L. Wallace.⁴

The first formations of the Union army under Sherman and Prentiss quickly crumbled away before the well-supported charges and heavy firing of their antagonists. But these troops, or rather a con-

¹ 10 W. R., 278.

² *Ib.*, 258.

³ The existence of these gaps was more or less masked by woods.

⁴ The division of Lewis Wallace was at Crump's Landing, a few miles to the rear.

siderable part of them, fell back to new positions, and the time which the Confederates necessarily consumed in taking advantage of their success, enabled the divisions of McClernand, Hurlbut, and Wallace to get under arms, and to prepare in some measure for the battle that was upon them.

Sherman's division, severely shaken by the first volleys, naturally retired on that of McClernand; Hurlbut sent a brigade (Veatch's) to their assistance; and these troops, constituting the right of the Federal army, fought gallantly and stubbornly during the whole day without any co-operation from, or even connection with, the troops constituting the centre of the army, from which they were separated by a wide gap. The result of such a conflict, of course, could not be doubtful; the left of the line was always exposed to be turned; the failure of some of Sherman's raw regiments to meet the assaults of the enemy frequently exposed McClernand's right¹; and, in spite of every effort of these brave generals, acting, as they did, in entire concert with each other, their troops, though sometimes, and even at the close of the day, repulsing their adversaries with great loss,² were finally forced to fall back to a position in which they covered the bridge over Snake Creek, by which Lewis Wallace's division was expected to come up from Crump's Landing.³ McClernand, in his report, says that his last position was the eighth which he had occupied since the fight began.⁴

¹ 10 W. R., 117.

² *Ib.*, 118, 517, 521.

³ *Ib.*, 250.

⁴ *Ib.*, 119.

Prentiss's division, composed of very raw troops, was badly broken by the first onset of the enemy, and fell back behind the two remaining brigades of Hurlbut's division, but afterwards, being rallied, it formed on Hurlbut's right, though not, of course, in its original strength.¹ To this force W. H. L. Wallace joined his own command, some of his troops forming on Prentiss's right.² These three bodies constituted the centre of the army, and, about 10 A.M., took up an exceedingly strong position, which they held against the repeated assaults of the Confederates for five or six hours.³ It was in directing one of these assaults that General Johnston, about half-past two o'clock, received a mortal wound.⁴ The Confederates called this position the Hornets' Nest,⁵ and made the mistake of repeatedly assaulting it in front, only to be as often beaten back with severe loss. Finally, after four o'clock in the afternoon, Bragg, who commanded on the Confederate right, finding further direct attacks to be useless, pushed his troops past the front line of the Federal position.⁶ This was the more easy, inasmuch as Stuart's brigade, on the extreme Federal left, had already fallen back.⁷ Hurlbut, finding himself flanked, reluctantly gave way, and retired to the Landing.⁸ This exposed Prentiss's left, and obliged him to change front.⁹ Soon afterwards, about five

¹ 10 W. R., 203, 204, 278.

² *Ib.*, 278. Hurlbut seems not to have known that Wallace's troops were on Prentiss's right. *Ib.*, 204.

³ *Ib.*, 149, 204.

⁴ *Ib.*, 387, 405, 466, 569. McClelland, 117, is in error.

⁵ Johnston, 622.

⁷ *Ib.*, 204, 259.

⁶ 10 W. R., 466.

⁸ *Ib.*, 279, 204.

⁹ *Ib.*, 279.

o'clock,¹ the Confederates under Polk having, in connection with the left wing under Hardee, disposed of Sherman and McClelland, turned to their right and attacked Wallace.² The divisions of Prentiss and Wallace were thus attacked in front and on both flanks. Their commanders, both determined and capable men, felt the importance of maintaining as long as possible their advanced position, fearing, naturally, the effect of a retreat on their raw troops, and being also desirous to defer to the last moment the inevitable conflict at the Landing. After five o'clock, however, it was plain that they were being surrounded, and in the endeavor to withdraw his command Wallace was killed. All but four of his regiments extricated themselves, but the command was thoroughly broken up and disorganized.³ Prentiss was forced to surrender with about 2200 men between five and half-past five o'clock.⁴ This ended the resistance of the Federal centre.

As for Stuart's isolated brigade on the extreme Federal left, its commander maintained his position till after 3 P.M.,⁵ and succeeded finally in bringing his command to the Landing, though constantly

¹ 10 W. R., 409.

² *Ib.*, 409.

³ 1 Grant, 346.

⁴ Prentiss fixes the hour at 5.30 P.M.—10 W. R., 279; but Colonel A. R. Chisolm, aide-de-camp to Beauregard, in a letter dated Morristown, N. J., May 3, 1887, says he brought Prentiss to Beauregard's headquarters at that hour, which would show that the surrender had occurred shortly before. Some regiments, however, did not surrender until after 5.30 P.M. See Colonel Shaw in 14 A. T., 69. Polk (10 W. R., 409) fixes the hour at shortly after 5 P.M. General Wheeler fixes the hour "approximately" at 4 P.M. 24 S. H. S., 130, 131.

⁵ 10 W. R., 204.

flanked by his antagonists, and losing more than half of his men.¹

These fights were all of the same general character. A body of Union troops would take up a position and make a stout defence there for a while, but would always, sooner or later, be compelled, by the advance of the Confederates past one or perhaps both flanks, to retire further to the rear, where a similar process would be repeated. Experiences like these were invariably attended with considerable loss in killed and wounded, and, also, with a great deal of straggling, for none but the steadiest and bravest soldiers could stand such discouraging encounters without losing faith in their leaders and confidence in themselves. Hence there were many fugitives, demoralized, undisciplined runaways, not all, by any means, irreclaimable cowards, but men who had lost, not unnaturally, confidence in their generals and all hope of a successful termination of the day. These men crowded to the rear, and were especially to be seen under the high bluff which lines the river near and below the Landing. Their numbers have been estimated all the way from 5000 to 15,000.² Efforts were made from time to time to rally them, but they would not budge from their shelter. They were thoroughly cowed and demoralized.

It goes without saying that the troops who kept up the fight were the choicest in the army, men whom no amount of adversity could daunt, who not only obstinately resisted the assaults against them,

¹ 10 W. R., 258, 259.

² *Ib.*, 292, 333; 1 Grant, 344.

but also carefully watched for opportunities (which were often presented) for dealing return blows. The Confederates had to pay dearly for their successes; but they recognized fully the extreme importance of securing their victory, and hesitated at no sacrifice of life. Elated by the constant advance of their own forces, and determined to break up completely the resisting fragments of the Federal army, the Confederate troops, eager, hopeful, in fact confident of success, ably and gallantly led by their officers, pushed on relentlessly over the bloody field of Shiloh from early morning till the late afternoon.

General Grant, at his breakfast in Savannah, heard the sound of heavy firing at the Landing.¹ He at once ordered Nelson to march with his division up the river on the east side, to a point opposite Pittsburg Landing, in readiness to be ferried over. He then started up the river himself in his own steamer, stopping at Crump's Landing to direct Lewis Wallace to be ready to march to Pittsburg with his division on receipt of orders. Finding, on his arrival at Pittsburg Landing, some time after eight o'clock,² that the battle was being hotly contested, he sent a staff-officer to Wallace to order him to march at once to the front. He then rode to the battle-field, saw Sherman at about 10 A.M.,³ soon afterwards saw Prentiss, whom he found at the Hornets' Nest, and whom he ordered to maintain that position at all hazards,⁴ then, with his mind full of the terrible scenes of disorder

¹ 1 Grant, 336.

² *Ib.*, 336; 10 W. R., 185. It is doubtful if he could have arrived much before nine o'clock; Hannaford, 252, n.

³ 1 Sherman, 244.

⁴ 10 W. R., 278, 279.

and defeat which he had just witnessed, wrote, about noon,¹ an urgent appeal to Buell. He asked him to get his troops upon the field at once. This, he said,—evidently looking on the battle as otherwise lost,—might “possibly save the day to us.” He added that the enemy’s force was estimated at over 100,000 men. About half-past twelve² he returned to the Landing, and went on board his headquarters steamer, where, about 1 P.M., Buell came to see him.³ Grant returned to the front soon after 2 P.M.⁴ About three o’clock he was with Sherman.⁵ He may also have visited during the afternoon the other division-commanders.⁶ Towards the close of the day he assisted in posting the retreating troops so as to cover the Landing.⁷ He seems to have given few orders, and in fact to have done little during the day except to show himself, and thus help to maintain confidence.

To return now to the progress of the fight. Hurlbut, it will be remembered, about four o’clock⁸ withdrew his command from the position which he, together with Prentiss and W. H. L. Wallace, had so long held, and fell back to the neighborhood of the Landing. Here he formed his troops on a line running west from the river, covering the Landing and supporting a battery of heavy guns.⁹ General Grant ordered him to take charge of all the troops that might arrive on this part of the field. Stuart’s brigade of Sherman’s division had already fallen back

¹ 11 W. R., 95 : 109 W. R., 232 ; 1 B. and L., 492.

² 10 W. R., 186.

³ 1 Grant, 343 ; Force, 131.

⁴ 1 B. and L., 492.

⁵ 10 W. R., 130, 204, 259.

⁶ 10 W. R., 186.

⁷ *Ib.*, 204, 279.

⁸ *Ib.*, 250.

⁹ *Ib.*, 204.

to this line.¹ To the right of Hurlbut's troops the division of McClernand and another brigade² of Sherman's division (Buckland's), constituting the right of the Federal army, after having, about 4.30 P.M., successfully repulsed a very fierce attack, had taken up their last position.³ A half-mile or more in front of the line occupied, or rather partially occupied, by these troops, the divisions of Prentiss and W. H. L. Wallace were at this time, five o'clock, still bravely maintaining their position, and engaging the attention of the main part of the Confederate army. As long as they held out, no general attack could be made on the Union lines near the Landing. It was not till half-past five o'clock⁴ that they were overwhelmed, that Prentiss and over 2000 of his men were obliged to surrender, that Wallace was killed and his command broken up, and that the way was opened for an attack on the troops which held the last line of the Federal army near the Landing. But, half an hour before this catastrophe, at five o'clock, the first regiments from the Army of the Cumberland had climbed the steep bank of the river above the Landing,⁵ and by half-past five⁶ had taken their places in the line of battle. Hardly had they got into position when they were fiercely assailed.

Bragg, who, on the death of Johnston, was the ranking Confederate officer on the right of their line,

¹ 10 W. R., 259.

² The other two brigades of Sherman's division had, by this time, been broken up. *Ib.*, 250.

³ *Ib.*, 118, 205, 517, 521.

⁴ *Ante*, 73, n. 4.

⁵ 10 W. R., 323, 339.

⁶ *Ib.*, 339.

lost no time,¹ after disposing of his prisoners, in ordering his available forces to push forward and complete the defeat of the Federals. But, as he says himself, "the sun was about disappearing,"² and "little time was left" in which to finish the work of the day.³ Ruggles, who commanded one of his divisions, while, in obedience to an order received from Bragg subsequent to the surrender of Prentiss, assembling his forces, received an order from Beauregard to withdraw his troops, and accordingly retired "just as night set in."⁴ Withers, who commanded Bragg's other division, carried two brigades—those of Chalmers⁵ and Jackson⁶—into action at once, so hastily, in fact, that Jackson's troops had not filled their cartridge-boxes. These two brigades, assisted by one battery, but otherwise unsupported, made the last assault on the Union lines that was made on that terrible day.

There were, as has been stated, some heavy guns in position, near the Landing. To these Colonel Webster, of General Grant's staff, added such other pieces as were available, and got together in all upwards of twenty guns.⁷ Two Federal gunboats in the river, the *Lexington* and *Tyler*, opened a flanking fire on the assailants, but, owing to the height of

¹ 10 W. R., 466, 533. Chalmers (550) is in error in fixing the hour at 4 P.M., as he says it was after the surrender of Prentiss, *i. e.*, about 5.30 P.M. See Withers, 533.

² The sun set at 6.25 P.M. 16 S. H. S., 311.

³ 10 W. R., 466.

⁴ *Ib.*, 472.

⁵ *Ib.*, 550.

⁶ *Ib.*, 555.

⁷ 1 Grant, 345. Force (155) puts the number much higher.

the bluff near the river, their guns received such an elevation that the shells fell a long way inside the bank. In front of the battery was a deep ravine (known as Dill's Branch), which for a short distance from the river was filled with water and was impassable, but to the westward of this presented no obstacle save the steepness of its northern slope, on the crest of which the Federal guns and supporting infantry, now consisting of a portion of Ammen's brigade of Nelson's division of the Army of the Cumberland,¹ were stationed.

Down into this ravine the gallant soldiers of Chalmers and Jackson rushed, and up the steep slope on its further side they climbed, only to receive the terrible fire of the battery and the destructive volleys of Ammen's fresh and steady infantry. To this fire they could, from their position, make no effective reply.² Again and again they attempted to scale the crest, and again and again they were forced back into the ditch. They continued the struggle till darkness came on, when they were withdrawn to a suitable position for the night.³

That this attack might have succeeded if it had been made before the troops from Buell's army arrived, is by no means improbable. We know that the infantry force stationed by General Grant in support of the battery was a very small one, for he says so himself,⁴ and that that infantry must have

¹ 10 W. R., 323, 326.

² Hence the loss in Ammen's brigade was very small.

³ 10 W. R., 550, 551, 555.

⁴ *Ib.*, 109; *cf.* 323, 334.

been much exhausted and more or less disorganized owing to the events of the day. The resistance which it could have opposed to the attacks of Chalmers and Jackson could not have been a very strenuous resistance. It is true that the attack, made as it was by two brigades only, one of which was entirely out of ammunition, was not a very formidable attack. But it cannot be denied that there would have been a very fair chance of that attack succeeding had it been made before the reinforcements from Buell's army arrived. Had it succeeded, and had the Landing been seized and occupied by the Confederates, they could easily have prevented any troops of Buell's from joining the Army of the Tennessee, and that army, or what was left of it, might have been forced to surrender.

Buell's troops were most certainly late in arriving, but this was in no respect their fault. Instead of there being steamers ready to transport the men of the Army of the Cumberland to Pittsburg Landing as soon as they should arrive at Savannah, General Grant's arrangements were so defective that he had to order Nelson, who commanded the leading division, to march through the swamp on the eastern side of the river to a point opposite the Landing,¹ where Grant could manage to get the men across on boats. It was hours before Nelson—although he was confessedly one of the most active and energetic officers in the service—could procure a guide through the swamp; even then, the guns had to be left behind, and the march was a severe one for the in-

¹ 11 W. R., 95.

fantry¹; so that, as we have seen, it was not until 5 P.M. that the head of the column, consisting of Ammen's brigade, arrived at Pittsburg Landing.²

Shortly before dark General Beauregard gave orders for the cessation of further assaults. He has been severely criticised for this, but it seems to us that nothing could have been accomplished by the Confederates at that time of the afternoon.

The Union army held that night a line running west from the river and covering the bridge over Snake Creek over which Lewis Wallace's division came up a little after nightfall. The extreme right was held by the remains of Sherman's division. Probably not more than 12,000 men of Grant's army, including Lewis Wallace's division, were with the colors.

Much has been written and much speculation indulged in as to the probable fate of the Army of the Tennessee in certain contingencies. It has been urged by the friends of General Johnston that, if he had lived, he would have organized an attack upon Grant's position at the Landing before the arrival of the fresh troops from Buell's army.³ But that Johnston could have attacked Grant at the Landing before he had overcome the resistance of Prentiss and Wallace cannot be supposed; and we know that before their resistance was overcome Ammen's brigade was in position at the Landing. There is nothing to show that Prentiss and Wallace could have been sooner routed if Johnston had not been killed.

It has been strongly urged by Bragg and Hardee

¹ 10 W. R., 331, 332.

² *Ib.*, 323, 339.
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³ Johnston, 633 *et seq.*

that they could have organized a force which would have overcome all resistance had not Beauregard ordered a halt.¹ We may admit that Beauregard erred in calling off his troops; he certainly should not have done so except on the advice of his corps-commanders, who were all good officers and were on the spot; there was for him everything to gain and little to risk by continuing the battle, especially as he knew nothing of the arrival of the troops from Buell's army.² But we do not believe that any force which could have been got together at that time in the afternoon by the Confederate generals could have overcome the resistance of the remnants of Grant's army and of the fresh troops of Buell's command. Many of the Confederate regiments had been practically broken up and rendered useless for the time being, and there were also many stragglers. The confusion caused by the prolonged fighting and the heavy losses was also very marked. Out of consideration for his soldiers, who were very tired, and being desirous of giving them as much time as possible for rest and reorganization in view of a renewal of the battle the next morning, Beauregard ordered, near dusk, a cessation of further efforts.³

In regard to General Grant's management in this severe action, it is to be noted that he at no time made any attempt to unite the disconnected portions of his army and establish a line of battle.⁴ It may

¹ Johnston, 630 *et seq.*

² 1 Beauregard, 306, n. ; 10 W. R., 387.

³ This question is ably treated by General Jordan in 16 S. H. S., 297 *et seq.*

⁴ This might have been done, one would suppose, on the line examined by Colonel McPherson. *Ante*, 57, n. 6.

be that this could not have been effected, even considering that for five or six hours Sherman and McClelland on the right, Wallace, Prentiss, and Hurlbut in the centre, and Stuart on the left, maintained themselves in their separated positions. But it is certain that General Grant made no effort to accomplish any such result. In fact, he can hardly be said to have undertaken to perform on this day the functions of a commander of an army. He left the division-commanders entirely to themselves. Sherman and McClelland consulted together, and decided for themselves what positions to hold, and what new lines of defence to take up¹; Hurlbut decided for himself how long it was wise to stay in the centre²; and, after he had retired, Prentiss and Wallace consulted together, and agreed to hold their positions at all hazards.³ In their accounts of these movements, which were the important movements of the day, the division-commanders make no reference to any orders or suggestions received from the commanding general. Grant, it is true, assisted in posting the defeated troops so as to protect the Landing, if possible.⁴ But this seems to have been about the extent of his active participation in the battle. It is evident from all the accounts,—Grant's included,—that the battle of Sunday was fought by the Union army without any directing head. Fortunate was it for the Union cause that five such gallant and capable division-commanders were on the field. They did all that could be done in the circumstances in

¹ 10 W. R., 117, 119, 250.³ *Ib.*, 279.² *Ib.*, 204.⁴ *Ib.*, 130, 204, 259.

which they were placed. But it cannot be supposed that their efforts would not have been better employed and therefore more successful had they found in Grant a general who was capable of assuming the entire control and direction of a great battle. Grant, however, was not a general of this sort. He had neither the ability nor the experience for such a task. He was a resolute and obstinate man, personally a very brave man, and a hard fighter, but he was not equal to an emergency of this magnitude. His only hope of ultimate success was that the separated bodies into which his army was divided might be able to protract their resistance until the arrival of Lewis Wallace's division,¹ or of some part of Buell's army. Whatever might be the chances, however, he was determined to hold out to the last; and this unfaltering courage on the part of the commanding general unquestionably contributed to the stubbornness and resolution which characterized the fighting of the Union army on this bloody day.

The battle of Shiloh was fought by the Confederates with the greatest energy and courage, but the original plan was not carried out. That plan was to turn the Federal left, so as to cut the Union army off from the Tennessee River and force it back upon Owl Creek, in which event it was hoped that it would be obliged to surrender.² When the Confed-

¹ This division did not come upon the field until after the battle was over, —Wallace having at first taken a road which brought him too far to the westward, so that, on learning of the defeat of the army, he found it necessary to retrace his steps, and to take another and more direct road to Pittsburg Landing. 10 W. R., 169-190; 1 Grant, 336-338; 351, n.

² 10 W. R., 397.

erate army advanced to the attack, its line of battle ran from northwest to southeast,¹ so that the left of the line first became engaged. This must have caused some concentration on that part of the line, whereas, to carry out the programme required, of course, that the right of the Confederate army should be strengthened. No attempt, however, seems to have been made to do this, or even to force Stuart, whose brigade constituted the Federal left, promptly from his position.² It is not easy to see why the Confederates could not have pushed at the commencement of the action, instead of at four in the afternoon,³ a large force northward on the road from Hamburg, which runs nearly parallel with the river, and so have begun the fight by attacking Stuart, and by also turning the left flank of Hurlbut's division. In this way they would have carried out their plan of battle to the letter, would have saved themselves great loss of life and great delay, and, very possibly, would have obtained possession of the Landing in time to prevent the arrival of any troops from Buell's army, a thing which would in all probability have secured to them a complete victory. But instead of doing this, the attack on Stuart was entrusted to a comparatively small force,⁴ and the grave mistake was made of assailing in front the strong position held by Hurlbut, Prentiss, and Wallace (known as the Hornets' Nest).⁵ This was persisted in for several hours. It was on this part of

¹ See Map No. II, Plate XIV., Part III., *Official Atlas*.

² 10 W. R., 258.

³ *Ib.*, 466, 533.

⁴ *Ib.*, 258.

⁵ *Ib.*, 466.

the field and while directing one of these attacks that General Johnston received the wound from which, about half-past two o'clock, he died.¹ His loss was no doubt a great one to his army, for he was a fine soldier and an inspiring leader of men.

It must, however, be said that Johnston did not attempt on this day to fill the rôle of commander of the army. He devoted himself entirely to the operations on the right of the line,² and left to Beauregard the general direction of the action. This general direction Beauregard unquestionably exercised before as well as after Johnston's death.³ There may have been a brief delay caused by this event, but the evidence is the other way. It is true that both Bragg⁴ and Hardee⁵ so state; but Bragg's statement is not borne out by his account of the movement by which the Federal position at the Hornets' Nest was turned,⁶ or by the accounts given by Generals Cheatham⁷ and Withers⁸ of that operation; while as for Hardee's statement, it is contained in a report which he did not write for nearly a year, and, as he represents himself to have been at the time on the left of the line, he could not have known anything of his own personal knowledge as to the effect of Johnston's death on the operations on the right. It is moreover plain from their reports that both these officers were actuated by a desire to exalt the importance of Johnston's services at the expense of

¹ 10 W. R., 387, 405, 569. McClernand (117) is in error.

² *Ib.*, 548, 558, 569, 624.

³ *Ib.*, 407, 438, 451, 454, 626, 627.

⁴ *Ib.*, 469.

⁵ *Ib.*, 569.

⁶ *Ib.*, 466.

⁷ *Ib.*, 439.

⁸ *Ib.*, 533.

those of Beauregard. Polk,¹ on the other hand, claims that the news of Johnston's fall "increased, instead of abated" the ardor of the soldiers. The truth probably is, that the delay caused by the death of Johnston was a small matter, but that the loss of his personal direction and example was a somewhat serious one.

During the night, the remainder of Nelson's division arrived, and also the division of Crittenden. That of McCook came up early in the morning, making about 20,000 men of the Army of the Cumberland on the field. Of the Army of the Tennessee, the division of Lewis Wallace, numbering over 5000 men, was fresh; the divisions of McClernand and Hurlbut, though much reduced, still preserved their organization; Sherman's and W. H. L. Wallace's divisions were broken up, but some of their regiments, or fragments of regiments, stepped bravely into line, ready for the next day's battle. Some of these troops were attached to Buell's command.²

Both Grant and Buell determined to take the offensive as early as possible. The latter pushed Nelson forward at five o'clock, and then placed Crittenden's division on his right. When McCook came up, his division took post on Crittenden's right. The whole line of the Army of the Cumberland was about a mile and a half long, its left resting on the Tennessee. On its right came the troops of Hurlbut, McClernand, and Lewis Wallace, under the immediate command of General Grant, at least during the last part of the action.³ Buell, from first

¹ 10 W. R., 409.

² *Ib.*, 105, 149, 305.

³ 1 Grant, 350, 351.

to last, took the personal direction¹ of his own troops, and handled them in masterly fashion. These troops of Buell's had all been subjected for months to careful instruction and thorough discipline, and their behavior on the field won the admiration of their comrades of the Army of the Tennessee, General Sherman especially speaking warmly of their appearance and doings.²

The Confederate army was no match for the Union army on this second day of the battle. It had lost on the previous day about 8000 men, besides stragglers. It had now not many more than 20,000 men in line, all of whom were in organizations which had been greatly shattered by the casualties of the battle of Sunday; the loss of so many valuable officers had completely changed the structure of many battalions. The General-in-Chief, also, Albert Sidney Johnston, had fallen. On the other hand, Grant brought to the attack more than 25,000 fresh troops, all of them in a good state of drill and discipline, besides the remnants of his other divisions, the indomitable soldiers who had defended themselves on Sunday with such firmness against a series of fierce and successful assaults, and who now embraced with eagerness the opportunity of returning their indebtedness to their antagonists.

Beauregard appreciated the situation with perfect clearness. He saw that he could not hope to win, but that he might count on his veteran troops to make it hard for his adversary to defeat him. His

¹ 10 W. R., 304, 324, 325, 336, 358, 369.

² *Ib.*, 251; so also Wallace, *Ib.*, 172.

corps-commanders well seconded his efforts. His troops were bravely and skilfully handled. They made no final or critical stand anywhere. If too hard pushed, they retreated; but they lost no opportunity of dealing return blows,—of concentrating on any isolated body of Federal troops which might in its ardor have advanced too far,—of taking advantage of any gap in the long Union line.¹ Between 3 and 4 P.M. the Confederate army had fallen back beyond Shiloh Church; and here General Grant saw fit to put a stop to the Federal advance. The camps had all been recovered,—the positions of Sunday morning retaken,—but the Federal army was fatigued,—Grant's troops with marching and fighting, Buell's with marching,—and Grant himself, who commanded the army, was so worn out with the terrible strain of the two days' fight, that he had not the energy to order a pursuit. The battle of Shiloh was over.

The losses had been very great, considering the numbers of the troops engaged. Of the Army of the Tennessee 8114 were killed and wounded, and 2830 captured or missing; of the Army of the Cumberland 2048 were killed and wounded, and 55 captured or missing; making a total of 10,162 killed and wounded, and 2885 captured and missing; in all 13,047.² The Confederates lost nearly as many killed and wounded, 9740, and 959 missing; in all 10,699.³ The loss in artillery was about equal, taking the two days together.⁴

¹ 10 W. R., 304, 325.

² *Id.*, 105, 108.

³ *Id.*, 396.

⁴ Force, 181.

There was no reason why General Grant should not promptly and unremittingly have followed up his beaten antagonist. Two more divisions of Buell's army, those of Wood and Thomas, were directly in the rear,—part of Wood's, in fact, was in the fight of Monday,—adding more than 12,000 men to the 20,000 men of the Army of the Cumberland already on the field. The division of Lewis Wallace of the Army of the Tennessee was in fine order; and in a day or two considerable accessions might be expected from the other divisions of the Army of the Tennessee. It was a case where the enemy were in full retreat, and that, too, after having lost very heavily in one battle and been defeated in the second; there could have been no doubt at all in the mind of any military man that the Union army, so largely composed as it now was of fresh and victorious troops, was in vastly better condition and spirits than the Confederate army could possibly be in. A general who was equal to the task of seeing the facts in the sober light of strong probability would have felt not only justified but obliged to act with vigor in this state of things. But Grant did not act at all. He utterly failed to seize the opportunity.

And no better opportunity than this was ever presented to a Federal general during the war. Bragg, the morning after the battle, reported to Beauregard that his troops were “utterly disorganized and demoralized”; that the road was “almost impassable”; that there were “no provisions and no forage”; that the “artillery was being left all

along the road.”¹ Breckinridge, who commanded the rear-guard, wrote that evening to Bragg: “My troops are worn out, and I don’t think can be relied on after the first volley. There is two days’ food enough for the men, but the horses are sinking rapidly for want of forage.”²

With the Confederate army in this condition, it is not difficult to conjecture what would have been the result of a vigorous pursuit if made by Grant at the head of the 40,000 troops, most of them fresh, which fortune had placed at his disposal. What Grant’s army was actually doing at this time, so far as could be seen by a Confederate officer sent out with a flag of truce, was thus reported to Beauregard’s chief-of-staff³: “He [the officer] says that, as far as he could observe, they [the Federals] seemed to be burying dead, looking after wounded, *and putting their camps to rights.*”⁴

In regard to this matter, General Grant says⁵:

“I wanted to pursue, but had not the heart to order the men who had fought desperately for two days, lying in the mud and rain whenever not fighting, and I did not feel disposed to positively order Buell, or any part of his command, to pursue. Although the senior in rank at the time, I had been so only a few weeks. Buell was, and had been for some time past, a Department-commander, while I commanded only a district.”⁶ The truth is, that Grant entirely failed to rise to the height of this

¹ 11 W. R., 398.

² *Ib.*, 403.

³ *Ib.*, 400.

⁴ The italics are ours.

⁵ 1 Grant, 354.

⁶ See Grant to Buell, 109 W. R., 233; 11 W. R., 96. The despatch from Halleck referred to in this letter does not seem to have been preserved.

occasion, and his excuses are of no weight whatever. The division of Wallace and the five divisions of Buell had undergone no hardships worth mentioning; and on them, as General Grant well knew, would have fallen the fatigue of the pursuit; and when it was possible to complete the defeat of the enemy by ordering immediate and vigorous action, it is inexcusable for Grant to mention the fact that Buell had been under his command only a few weeks. Buell, as Grant well knew, was the last man in the army to disobey his military superior. Grant, in fact, does not mean to be understood as fearing that Buell would disobey him if he gave the order; he only means to say that he felt some embarrassment, in view of Buell's late position in the service, in giving him the order. But how can a feeling of this kind, so entirely opposed to the principles of military duty, exonerate the officer in charge from exerting all his official powers to carry out the plan which commends itself to his judgment?

A reconnoissance made by Sherman the day after the battle showed that the Confederates were retreating on Corinth. The Union army thereupon devoted itself to repairing damages, and waited for General Halleck, the head of the Department, to come from St. Louis and assume command in person. This officer arrived at Pittsburg Landing on April 11th. He at once began to take measures to increase the size of his army, before moving upon the enemy.

General Pope, who, as we have seen, had been conducting operations against New Madrid and Island

No. 10 on the Mississippi River,¹ brought them, by a series of skilfully contrived and well-conducted movements, to a successful termination on the 8th of April, capturing the Confederate garrison, some 7000 men, with all their guns and stores. He was then sent to besiege Fort Pillow, a post about seventy miles farther down the river, but he had not completed his examination of the position when he was ordered to join the army under Halleck. This he did on April 21st. He brought with him some 21,000 men.² Other reinforcements raised Halleck's force to over 100,000 men.³

On the 1st of May a force of upwards of 15,000 men under General Van Dorn reached Beauregard from Memphis. These troops had seen a good deal of service in Missouri.

About the 28th of April the Union army began to move slowly and cautiously towards Corinth,⁴ and in a little over a week the place was partially invested. From time to time during the next four weeks the lines were advanced, fresh positions taken, and the situation rendered continually more and more unsafe for the Confederates. Finally, on May 30th, Beauregard evacuated the place.⁵ He withdrew with over 52,000 men,⁶ carrying off all his artillery and the greater part of his stores. The evacuation was effected without the knowledge of the Federal general, and was skilfully and thoroughly carried out in all respects. Beauregard retired to

¹ *Ante*, 53.

² 11 W. R., 146.

³ *Ib.*, 146, 148, 151.

⁴ *Ib.*, 135 *et seq.*

⁵ *Ib.*, 225 ; 10 W. R., 668.

⁶ 10 W. R., 780.

Tupelo in Mississippi, a place about fifty miles south of Corinth, which he had selected as affording excellent water supply and possessing healthful surroundings.¹ His army had been reduced considerably by sickness while at Corinth, and the sanitary advantages of Tupelo were well suited to restore the health of the troops.² In a very short time the Confederate army was as large and formidable as ever.

The evacuation of Corinth necessitated³ that of Fort Pillow, which was abandoned on June 3d.⁴ This opened the way for the advance of the Federal gunboats down the Mississippi. Admiral Davis, who had succeeded Foote in command, totally defeated the Confederate fleet in front of Memphis on June 6th, and that city, one of the most considerable in the South, was at once occupied by Federal troops. The Mississippi River was now open as far as Vicksburg, where the bluffs rendered possible the construction of works which would close the river to a hostile armament. Beauregard had, as early as April 21st, given orders for the erection of suitable fortifications there.⁵ This place, and Port Hudson, some 200 miles below, were now the only points on the Mississippi River held by the Confederates,—New Orleans having fallen on the 24th of April, when Admiral Farragut made his famous passage of the forts below the city.

The spring campaign of the western Federal ar-

¹ 1 Beauregard, 400 ; 10 W. R., 783.

² 10 W. R., 776, 783.

³ 1 Beauregard, 373, giving letter from Beauregard to Villepigue dated May 28th.

⁴ 11 W. R., 579.

⁵ *Ib.*, 430.

mies was over. It had certainly accomplished a great deal, but it had not accomplished all that might justly have been expected. It was assuredly a great thing to have gained control of Kentucky and of western and middle Tennessee, and to have opened the Mississippi River as far as Vicksburg. But the Confederate army of the West still remained intact. To destroy this army was now the remaining task of General Halleck. This task he had really never attempted to perform, and even now, when he was at the head of more than 100,000 excellent troops, commanded by some of the most skilful generals in the service of the United States, he deliberately turned aside from its accomplishment. It was possible to follow up the army of Beauregard in June, 1862, as closely as, in April, 1865, Grant and Meade followed up the army of Lee. But Halleck was satisfied with what had been done. He was incapable of realizing that, so long as the army of Beauregard was left unharmed,—in truth, until it should be destroyed,—it was perfectly possible for it to assume the offensive and to recover much, and no one could say how much, of what now appeared to be lost to the Confederacy. He was blind to the lessons of the great masters in the art of war. He utterly failed to see that, with an army twice as large as that of his opponent, as his army now was, it was within his power to crush the Confederate cause in the West. But how he dispersed his forces, and what were the schemes which approved themselves to his judgment, we reserve for another chapter. It is time that we returned to Virginia.

NOTE TO CHAPTER I.

(p. 57, n. 6.) The following extract from a lecture recently delivered by Major (now Lieutenant-Colonel) Arthur L. Wagner, U. S. Army, before the Military Historical Society of Massachusetts, and printed in the *Journal* of the Military Service Institution for March, 1898, page 231, is directly in point:

“At Shiloh, the first desperate and bitter struggle of the war, where, as Lannes said of Montebello, the bones crashed like glass, no use was made of intrenchments; though, according to General Sherman, the position could, at a later period of the war, have been rendered impregnable in a single night. Though the pick and spade had been but little used in the West, General Grant tells us, in his *Memoirs*,¹ he had taken the subject of intrenchments under consideration soon after resuming command in the field, but his only military engineer had reported unfavorably upon the project. ‘Besides this,’ he says, ‘the troops with me, officers and men, needed discipline and drill more than they did experience with the pick, shovel, and axe. Reinforcements were arriving almost daily, composed of troops that had been hastily thrown together into companies and regiments—fragments of incomplete organizations—

¹ I Grant, 357.

the men and officers strangers to each other. Under all these circumstances, I concluded that drill and discipline were worth more to our men than fortifications.' General Sherman says: 'We did not fortify our camps against an attack, because we had no orders to do so, and because such a course would have made our raw men timid.'¹

"With all due respect to the illustrious commanders quoted above, these reasons do not seem to be at all adequate. If the men were untrained and undisciplined, if their organization was imperfect, and officers and men were strangers to each other, there was all the more reason why the raw troops should have been given the physical and moral support of intrenchments in a camp which they were expected to occupy for some days. If the position could have been quickly made impregnable, the loss of time from drill would have been very slight; and as to the men being made timid by the use of intrenchments, it may be well questioned whether the troops would have fought less stubbornly if they had been protected by breastworks while their assailants were in the open. The true reason, it seems to me, is expressed in the words of General Grant, that the pick and spade had not yet been used to any extent in the West; and he and Sherman doubtless neglected the use of intrenchments for the same reason that Lee did, a few months later, at Antietam; namely, that the utility of hasty intrenchments on the field of battle was not yet appreciated."

It is difficult to say whether this criticism is more

¹ I Sherman, 229.
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remarkable for its sound sense or for the moderation of its language. The excuses of Grant and Sherman can hardly be said to deserve such respectful consideration.





CHAPTER II.

THE PENINSULAR CAMPAIGN.¹

FORT MONROE, which General McClellan had selected as his base of operations, was a very strong and large work, situated at the southeastern extremity of the peninsula between the York and James rivers, and about seventy miles from Richmond. When he first conceived the idea of a movement up the peninsula, General McClellan pictured his army as supported on either flank by a Federal fleet, not only carrying the needed supplies, but able, by transporting his detachments at will to points far in the rear of any opposing bodies of the enemy, to compel the prompt and bloodless evacuation of each and every line of defence which his adversaries might take up, until his army should reach the immediate neighborhood of Richmond. There he expected to fight his great battle, and, in winning it, to destroy his enemy's main army, and at the same time to capture the seat of government of the Confederate States.

But when, in the middle of March, 1862, General McClellan began sending his troops to Fort Monroe,

¹ See Map III., facing page 216.

the opportunity for carrying out this attractive programme had passed away. The *Merrimac* had made her appearance, and had destroyed the *Congress* and the *Cumberland*; and, while the chief reliance of the United States naval authorities was the little ironclad *Monitor*, the attention of the whole fleet was necessarily devoted to making preparations for the next appearance of the formidable Confederate vessel. It was out of the question for the Federal general to think of using the *James* as a line of supply; the *Merrimac* might at any time run out of the harbor of Norfolk and close the mouth of the *James*. There was, to be sure, good ground to think that she would be stopped in her northward progress should she attempt to run by the fort towards the mouth of the *York*; but this was the best that Flag-Officer Goldsborough, who commanded the Federal fleet in Hampton Roads, could promise, or, indeed, hope for, so far as the *Merrimac* was concerned.¹

Nor was the *York River* open to the Federal forces. It was well known that the Confederates had erected formidable batteries at *Yorktown*, on the south side of the river, and also on the opposite shore at *Gloucester*, where the river is only a thousand yards wide, thus effectually closing to the Federal forces this avenue of communication and supply. *McClellan* at first thought that these works might be carried by a combined land and naval attack, and he evidently supposed that in such an attack the

¹ Goldsborough's testimony, 1 C. W. (1863), 634. See General J. C. Palfrey's paper in 1 M. H. S. M., 103 *et seq.*

navy would play the principal part. He wrote to the Secretary of War¹ that unless the navy concentrated upon the York River all their most powerful batteries, he would be obliged to resort to siege operations, and that these might consume many weeks, whereas with the full co-operation of the navy the reduction of Yorktown ought not to require many hours. In this statement of the results to be expected from an attack by the navy, McClellan showed that he had given no serious consideration to the problem presented.² The height at which the enemy's batteries were placed,—those at Yorktown being sixty or seventy feet,³ and those at Gloucester thirty or forty feet⁴ above the water,—rendered a naval attack perilous in the extreme for the ships engaged, and there was scarcely a chance of a successful result. The most that could be hoped for was that some of the vessels might run the gauntlet of the forts, but this alone could not compel their evacuation.⁵ Moreover, the demands made upon Flag-Officer Goldsborough were so great that he had no force to spare for any such attack, had one been deemed advisable.⁶

Of all this General McClellan was fully aware before he went to the Peninsula⁷; but with his characteristic persistence (to which we have already

¹ March 19, 1862; 5 W. R., 57, 58.

² 1 M. H. S. M., 111, where the subject is carefully examined by General J. C. Palfrey.

³ 1 C. W. (1863), 630.

⁴ 12 W. R., 338.

⁵ 1 M. H. S. M., 142; 14 W. R., 80, 81.

⁶ Barnard to McClellan, March 20, 1862; McClellan's O. S., 247.

⁷ See Part I., 245, 267-269.

called attention) in adhering to his original plan even when circumstances had so changed that the scheme no longer presented the features which had first attracted him, he still determined to transport his army to the Peninsula, and the 2d, 3d, and 4th corps were sent there during the month of March. McClellan had no knowledge of any Confederate works except those at Yorktown and Gloucester; he had no accurate information of the topography of the region lying between Yorktown and the James; and he assumed that with the exception of the fortifications at Yorktown he would find no part of the Peninsula in a state of defence. He was not one of those generals who have the faculty of divining his adversary's positions and intentions; his imagination—and he had a great deal of imagination—found its sole employment in the consideration of his own schemes. He never seems to have suspected that his antagonists—skilful and able men as he knew them to be—would never consent to leave their garrison of Yorktown in the fatally exposed situation in which Lord Cornwallis found himself when he was surrounded by the armies of Washington and Rochambeau. He calculated, by a rapid march from Fortress Monroe on a road leading up the middle of the Peninsula to a place known as the Half-way House, to throw a large body of troops,—the 4th corps, under Keyes,—in rear of Yorktown, and then to commence siege operations, which could hardly fail ultimately of a successful result. If any unusual difficulty should be experienced in these operations, he purposed

landing the 1st corps on the left bank of the York, or on the Severn in rear of Gloucester, so that that post might be attacked simultaneously with Yorktown.¹

But these projects met with an immediate check. Keyes's march was arrested by strong works constructed along the line of the Warwick River and its adjacent marshes, which effectually stopped the Half-way House movement. It was necessary to make a thorough examination of the enemy's position. It was soon found that he had established a strong line of intrenchments extending from Yorktown on the north to the mouth of the Warwick River on the south,—clear across the Peninsula.

Just at this moment, when McClellan, who had brought up in front of the lines of Yorktown the 2d, 3d, and 4th corps, was about to direct the 1st corps upon Gloucester, as soon as it should arrive from Alexandria, he was informed that the President, in view of the defenceless state in which Washington had been left, had decided to detain the 1st corps for the present in the neighborhood of the Capital.² This action was taken by Mr. Lincoln as soon as he received the report of Generals Hitchcock and Thomas³; and we are free to say that, so far as General McClellan was concerned, the President's action was perfectly warranted by the neglect of that officer to comply with his orders in regard to leaving a sufficient force for the garrison of the Capital. Whether the President's action was or was not

¹ 12 W. R., 8.

² These troops were afterwards stationed near Fredericksburg.

³ See Part I., 254.

wise from a military point of view is, of course, another question, the consideration of which we will reserve for the present.¹

McClellan, however, felt that he had received an undeserved blow,² and that the success, or, at any rate, the brilliant success, of his operations was seriously endangered by the withdrawal from his command of such a large force as McDowell's corps. There was, as he looked at it, nothing for him now to do but to commence siege operations against some one or more points in the Confederate lines. The works at Yorktown were naturally selected,³ and the erection of powerful batteries, whose fire would render them untenable, was promptly begun. If these operations should be skilfully and energetically pushed forward, the result, although necessarily deferred for some weeks, could not be doubtful in the end. Yorktown must fall, and with it the whole Confederate line, as far as the James River.

But a more enterprising general than McClellan would not easily have been satisfied to await the result of a siege. He would have attempted in earnest to find some weak place in the enemy's works. There was every chance that such a place could be found, for the Confederate lines were five miles long⁴ and very insufficiently guarded, Magruder, who commanded when McClellan first arrived, not having more than 13,000⁵ men under him at that

¹ See note 1, at the end of this chapter.

² See McClellan's O. S., 308, 310, 313

³ Barnard's Report; 12 W. R., 318.

⁴ 1 M. H. S. M., 145.

⁵ Johnston's *Narrative*, 111, n.

time. It is true that he was soon after considerably reinforced ; but it probably was possible, during the first half of April at any rate, to break the Confederate lines at some points.¹ There was every reason why the attempt should be made; for the weather was very rainy, the mud was very deep, and the men were losing their health every day they stayed in the boggy and marshy land. The operations of a siege can never be understood by the mass of an army, which of course has little or nothing to do until the breach is made and an assault is ordered. The intervening time is spent in unwholesome and depressing surroundings; there is a general cessation of the regular military exercises practised in the camps of winter, which do so much to keep up the health and spirits of the troops; every one is on the watch; the enemy is supposed to be vigilant, and always to be meditating some *coup*; the soldiers are disgusted with their own inactivity. Every wise commander will try his best to find a way of escape from such a state of things as necessarily existed in General McClellan's army during the siege of Yorktown.

But General McClellan was neither an enterprising man nor a "fighting" general. He had a constitutional aversion to the risks inseparable from all military operations. He shrank from the test of battle. It was in vain that the President, to whom he appealed to change the decision which deprived him of McDowell's corps, told him that he must

¹ "No one but McClellan could have hesitated to attack." Johnston to Lee, April 22, 1862; 14 W. R., 456. So Allan, 15. Cf. 12 W. R., 601.

“strike a blow,” that he “must act.”¹ It is not that McClellan should be blamed for not ordering an assault which in his own judgment was decidedly unlikely to succeed,—and he certainly was advised by his chief-of-engineers that it was not practicable to break the enemy’s lines across the isthmus, or to take Yorktown by assault.² But he never seems to have made his reconnoissances with the desire of finding out where an assault was practicable, and, accordingly, one is not surprised that he did not succeed in finding any such place.

The affair at Lee’s Mill, on the 16th of April, was the only one where anything like an assault was attempted, and it is plain from the reports that had the able officer who had charge of the operation—General William F. Smith³—been permitted to make his arrangements for a serious and determined assault, instead of a mere reconnoissance, the Confederate line at that point would have been broken, and it would have been perfectly practicable for General McClellan to pour thousands of troops through the gap thus made, thereby rendering that part of the Confederate line entirely untenable. But the whole scope of the operation was reduced by General McClellan to that of a mere inquiry into the state of the enemy’s works, and, naturally enough,

¹ 12 W. R., 15.

² Barnard’s Report ; 12 W. R., 318.

³ Familiarly known in the army as General Baldy Smith. Keyes, Smith’s corps-commander, told the Committee on the Conduct of the War that he “had seen, on many occasions, a disposition on his [Smith’s] part to try to break through the enemy’s line with his division, or a portion of it,” and he “had, on several occasions, told General Smith not to attempt it.” 1 C. W. (1863), 599.

nothing of importance was effected.¹ The troops, who behaved most gallantly, carried the enemy's front intrenchments and occupied them nearly an hour, but it was not deemed best to push the advantage, and they were withdrawn. One cannot help believing that greater enterprise and courage on the part of the commanding general would have been rewarded by a striking success.²

Although President Lincoln would not consent to reverse his action in respect to the retention near Washington of the greater part of McDowell's corps, he yielded to General McClellan's entreaties so far as to send him the division of Franklin. McClellan requested this reinforcement for the express purpose of investing and attacking Gloucester. He asked for two divisions, but expressed himself willing to undertake this task with that of Franklin alone. Franklin arrived on the 22d of April, having been delayed from various causes. By that time it was supposed that the Confederates had reinforced the garrison of Gloucester; nevertheless, preparations were made for landing Franklin's troops on the left bank of the York River, three or four miles below the post; but, owing to the shallowness of the water, the matter was found more difficult than had been expected, and before the troops could be disembarked, the evacuation of Yorktown had rendered the operation useless.³

¹ Smith's Report; 12 W. R., 366; Webb, 63.

² See the Reports of Magruder, 12 W. R., 406, 407; Cabell, *Ib.*, 413; and others. See, also, General J. C. Palfrey's examination of this subject in 1 M. H. S. M., 145.

³ Report of Colonel Alexander, 12 W. R., 134. Cf. Webb, 61.

Meantime the preparations for concentrating on the defences of Yorktown a fire, both direct and vertical, which should render the works untenable, were pushed forward with great energy. Heavy ordnance was shipped from the Northern arsenals to meet all the requirements of the able officers who directed the siege, General Fitz-John Porter, who had the superintendence of the operations, General Barnard, the chief engineer of the army, and General Barry, the chief-of-artillery. Early in May the arrangements were substantially completed; the batteries were to open on the 5th; and it was confidently expected that the Confederates could not possibly sustain for more than a few hours the terrible fire of the Union siege-guns and mortars. On the night of the 3d, however, Johnston evacuated his lines, leaving behind him all his heavy guns and large quantities of ammunition and supplies, and retired on Williamsburg; and, the next day, the Federal troops occupied Yorktown.

The Confederate generals had not expected to detain their antagonists so long in the Peninsula. General Johnston, who had fallen back from the Rapidan to Richmond with the bulk of his forces early in April, as soon as it was known that the Union army had landed at Fortress Monroe, had been entrusted by President Davis with the command of the troops in the Peninsula and at Norfolk, then under Magruder and Huger.¹ He had visited Yorktown, and, while approving fully of Magruder's dispositions, had recognized that the Federal gen-

¹ 18 W. R., 846.

eral might turn the position by capturing the batteries and ascending the York River, if indeed he did not succeed in carrying by assault some weak place in the line to the south of Yorktown.¹

Johnston, accordingly, advocated, on his return to Richmond about the middle of April, that no more troops should be sent to the Peninsula, where the conditions were very unfavorable for the health of the men, but, rather, that all the available Confederate forces should be concentrated in the neighborhood of Richmond, so that it might be possible to attack McClellan on his arrival with an army equal or superior in numbers to his own. He urged that troops be brought from the Atlantic coast, and that when Magruder should be forced to evacuate the lines of Yorktown, Norfolk also should be abandoned, and its garrison, under General Huger, should be brought to Richmond. In these views General Johnston was seconded by General G. W. Smith.²

Randolph, the Confederate Secretary of War, on the other hand, and General Lee, who had on the 13th of March been entrusted with the conduct,—under the President,—of all the military operations in the Confederacy,³ recommended that Johnston's army be sent to reinforce Magruder; and President Davis, after a long hearing, finally so decided.⁴

¹ Johnston's *Narrative*, 112, 113.

² *Ib.*, 113-115; Smith's C. W. P., 41 *et seq.*

³ 5 W. R., 1099.

⁴ General Smith states that the loss to the Confederates in the trenches near Yorktown from "exposure, impure water, and consequent disease" was very great. Smith's C. W. P., 44. See Hill to Randolph, April 21, 1862; 14 W. R., 454. Also Hill's Report, 12 W. R., 606.

Hence when McClellan's preparations had rendered Yorktown untenable, the whole Confederate army, instead of Magruder's command only, was obliged to fall back to Richmond.

The Confederates retired in fairly good order and condition. The Federal advance-guard came up with them on the 5th of May, and an obstinately contested and bloody action was fought at Williamsburg, in which the Federals lost five guns, although the encounter terminated on the whole somewhat in their favor.

General McClellan did not arrive on the field of Williamsburg until the action was practically over. He had stayed at Yorktown to give his personal attention to the embarkation of the divisions of Franklin, Sedgwick, Porter, and Richardson, which were to proceed up the York River towards West Point (where the York is formed by the confluence of the Pamunkey and Mattaponi rivers), and thence a short distance up the Pamunkey to a point known as Eltham's Landing, nearly opposite West Point. Here they were to land; and when they had concentrated, they were to move upon Johnston's army and its trains as they were retreating from Yorktown. But, owing to the shallowness of the water and other causes,¹ it took a long time to get Franklin's troops on board the transports, and it was not until the 7th that they disembarked, joined only by one brigade of Sedgwick's division. They were very short of provisions and forage; and, before the other

¹ See Franklin's letter in McClellan's O. S., 336; also 12 W. R., 614 *et seq.*

troops could arrive, they were attacked by the Confederates under G. W. Smith, whose only object was to hinder any movement of the Federal force towards the roads on which the army of Johnston was moving. This object was accomplished, and the retreating Confederates passed on unhindered towards Richmond. Thus the flanking movement, on which General McClellan had apparently counted to win for him a decided advantage, had secured only a comparatively easy advance of his right wing as far as West Point.

The left wing and centre followed the retreating Confederates very leisurely. On the 16th McClellan established his headquarters at White House on the Pamunkey.

Meantime the Confederates had met with a serious loss in the capture of Norfolk and the destruction of their famous ironclad. The evacuation of Yorktown had rendered Norfolk an easy prey to the Federal forces, which on May 10th occupied the place and its defences. The *Merrimac* was found to draw too much water to go up the river, and it was of course out of the question for her to keep the sea, now that the only port where she could procure supplies was closed to her. Accordingly, on the morning of May 11th, she was blown up by her commander, Commodore Tattnall.¹ The James River was now open to the Federal fleet to a point about seven or eight miles from Richmond. There, on high ground known as Drewry's Bluff, on the right bank of the river, a fort had been constructed, and obstructions had been

¹ Soley, 78, 79.

placed in the channel. A fleet under Commodore Rodgers, consisting of the *Galena* and other iron-clads, attempting to silence the work and pass up the river, was defeated on the 15th of May after a four hours' contest.¹ But up to that point the James was open to the Federal vessels.

Let us now cast a glance at the general situation.

The rivers between which lay the Peninsula were both available for the operations of the United States forces. The Federal fleet, now that the *Merrimac* was destroyed, held the undisputed control of the sea and of all navigable waters. The army of General McClellan was being supplied at White House on the Pamunkey with forage, provisions, and ammunition brought by water from Washington and New York. Scarcely sixty miles away, on the Rappahannock, opposite Fredericksburg,² lay the corps of McDowell, 30,000 strong, awaiting only the arrival of Shields's division of Banks's corps before it should receive the order to march south and take part in the capture of Richmond. McClellan's army could be pushed forward from White House as a base to the north of Richmond, in which case the small Confederate force under General Anderson which now confronted McDowell would be placed between two fires, and unless reinforced with the bulk of Johnston's army, obliged to retreat. The junction with McDowell's command could then be effected without difficulty. Or, if it should be

¹ 12 W. R., 636; see, also, 14 W. R., 177-179. The 15th of May, 1862, was Thursday.

² The city was occupied by one brigade of Union troops. 18 W. R., 170, 171; Schriver to King.

thought advisable for McClellan to advance along the south side of the Peninsula, a base of supplies could easily be arranged for his army on the north side of the James. Or, the river might be crossed, and City Point might with equal ease be selected as the base of supplies. Petersburg was absolutely undefended,¹ and could be occupied without opposition. Any troops which the administration could spare from the forces charged with the defence of the Capital might be sent by water to join the Army of the Potomac. This last line of operations was in truth the one which promised the best results. If Petersburg should be occupied in force by the Federals, it is hard to see how the Confederates could expect long to retain their hold on Richmond.

In fact, in every way, the situation was undeniably a threatening one for the Confederates. Small progress had been made with the fortifications around Richmond. The army, though always ready for a fight, had lost in numbers and *moral* by its experience in the trenches near Yorktown, through the effect of inaction, malaria, and unwonted hardships caused by the heavy rains and the swampy land. Its condition was not improved by having been compelled to evacuate its position and retreat before its antagonist. The discipline was exceedingly lax. "Stragglers," wrote Johnston to Lee on May 9th, "cover the country, and Richmond is no doubt filled with the 'absent without leave.' . . . The men are full of spirit when near the enemy, but at other times, to avoid restraint, leave their regi-

¹ 14 W. R., 493, 495; 2 B. & L., 386, n.
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ments in crowds. To enable us to gather the whole army for battle would require a notice of several days.”¹

The Confederate authorities, both civil and military, were also well aware that McClellan's army, apart from McDowell's corps, outnumbered that of Johnston nearly three to two, the latter being only about 50,000 strong. Johnston urged on General Lee, who, under President Davis, had control of the military operations of the Confederacy, the absolute necessity “of concentrating near Richmond all the troops within reach. . . . If the President,” said he, “will direct the concentration of all the troops of North Carolina and eastern Virginia, we may be able to hold middle Virginia at least. If we permit ourselves to be driven beyond Richmond, we lose the means of maintaining this army. . . . A concentration of all our available forces may enable us to fight successfully. Let us try.”²

The tone of this letter from the front is certainly not hopeful. In Richmond, preparations were made for the instant removal of the military papers.³ Even Mr. Davis spoke in a letter to Johnston of the “drooping cause of our country.”⁴ It is clear that the leading men in the Confederacy believed the military situation to be one of extreme gravity. And, in fact, it seems reasonably certain that if the force at the disposal of the United States Govern-

¹ 14 W. R., 503. Cf. Hill to Randolph, *Ib.*, 506, and Hill's Report, 12 W. R., 606.

² 14 W. R., 506,—May 10, 1862. See, also, D. H. Hill to Randolph, *Ib.*, 544.

³ *Ib.*, 504,—same date.

⁴ *Ib.*, 508, May 11, 1862.

ment in the middle of May, 1862, had been exerted with good judgment, Richmond would soon have fallen, and Virginia, and perhaps North Carolina, been wrested from the Southern Confederacy.¹

Leaving now, for the moment, the story of the operations of the army under the immediate command of General McClellan, let us see what was being done in other parts of Virginia.

When McClellan left Washington to take the field with the Army of the Potomac, he was, as we have seen, relieved from the responsibility of directing the other forces of the United States, and was strictly confined to the command of the Army (or Department) of the Potomac,² on the ground that this task required all his attention. The Government should now have entrusted to some competent officer,—General McDowell, for instance,—the control of all the other forces in the Virginia theatre of war, so as to have ensured unity of design and action in their management. Instead of doing this, they divided the theatre of war into Departments, so called, and put in control of each an officer of high rank. The region lying west of the Shenandoah Valley constituted one of these districts, called the Mountain Department, and to this General Frémont was assigned.³ Early in April two Departments were carved out of the Department of the Potomac,—that of the Rappahannock, which included the District of Columbia, which was entrusted to General McDowell, and that of the Shenandoah, which was given to General Banks.⁴ The President and Secretary of War re-

¹ Cf. Allan, 59. ² See Part I., 255. ³ 5 W. R., 54. ⁴ 18 W. R., 43.

served to themselves the general control of military operations in all parts of the country, and the generals in command of the Departments were instructed to report directly to the Secretary.

In addition to the blame which deservedly rests upon Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Stanton for the unnecessary division of the theatre of war into separate districts, the assumption by these two civilians of military command has afforded great opportunity for harsh and sarcastic criticism.¹ And, in truth, to a certain extent, the conduct of the President and Secretary deserves severe criticism, as we shall soon have occasion to see. But when it is remembered how very little experience in war was possessed by any of the generals, and especially when we bear in mind that the grievous shortcomings of General McClellan must have been patent to the eyes of the chiefs of the administration, we cannot wonder at their reserving to themselves the general superintendence of affairs. Had they confined themselves to this, and this only, had they abstained strictly from undertaking to plan campaigns, and especially had they always kept themselves open to advice from the military men in charge of the immediate operations, it is quite possible that they would have managed well enough. That Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Stanton intended to do their best for the success of General McClellan's campaign, cannot, in our opinion, be seriously doubted; that they were utterly without an intelligent grasp of the fundamental principles by which the conduct of all military operations

¹ See Swinton, 122.

should be regulated, is, in our opinion, equally plain.

Returning now to the actual situation of affairs¹: Frémont's main body was at and near a place in the heart of the Alleghanies called Franklin, about forty miles in a straight line west of New Market, a town on the Shenandoah Valley turnpike nearly thirty miles southwest of Strasburg. One brigade of his army under Milroy, numbering about 3500 men,² had pushed through the mountains, and, about the 1st of May, appeared near McDowell,³ a village about twenty-five miles northwest of Staunton, a town at the southern or upper end of the Shenandoah Valley. It was supposed that Frémont could put about 15,000 men into the field in this region. Banks's headquarters were at New Market, but he occupied Harrisonburg⁴ with some 19,000 men,—the divisions of Williams and Shields and some cavalry. The rest of his corps was guarding his communications. McDowell, with 30,000 men, was, as we have seen, opposite Fredericksburg.⁵

Jackson, after his defeat at Kernstown on March 23d,⁶ had fallen back to Swift Run Gap, in the Blue Ridge, eighteen miles southeast of Harrisonburg, ready to move on Banks's communications should he attempt an advance on Staunton. He had, on the 1st of May, over 8000 men with him.⁷ A force of 3000 Confederates, under Edward Johnson,⁸ was observing Milroy, and a division under Ewell, 8000

¹ See Map IV., facing page 132.

² 15 W. R., 7.

³ 18 W. R., 123.

⁴ Gordon, 164.

⁵ *Ante*, 112.

⁶ See Part I., 253.

⁷ 18 W. R., 879.

⁸ Allan's *Jackson*, 66.

strong,¹ was at or near Gordonsville. Jackson's total force thus amounted to some 19,000 men.

There were two weak points in the distribution of the Federal forces.

In the first place, there was no excuse for keeping the 15,000 men under Frémont out of the field of active operations. By far the larger part of his command should have been employed to augment the force under Banks, which was originally fixed at about 23,000 men, but which, owing to the detention of the brigades of Abercrombie and Geary and other troops on or near the line of the Manassas Gap railway, had now fallen far below that figure. These troops, in fact, had now been added to the force under McDowell, so that Banks's corps consisted on May 1st almost entirely of the divisions of Williams and Shields, and Shields's division was on the 1st of May² ordered to join McDowell. The column in the Valley ought, therefore, to have been augmented at once by the greater part of the troops under Frémont, who were wholly useless where they were. But to do this would, in all probability, have aroused jealousies and created misunderstandings. The administration, in fact, had tied its own hands by the creation of these independent Departments within the limits of the theatre of war.

In the second place, Banks, with his small force, was at Harrisonburg, a great deal too far to the front. In fact this was the opinion of the Secretary of War, who, on the very day when Shields was ordered to join McDowell, directed Banks to fall back

¹ Allan's *Jackson*, 68.

² 18 W. R., 121.

to Strasburg.¹ Strasburg was selected because it was the western terminus of the Manassas Gap railroad,² and it was naturally considered undesirable to retreat behind that line of intercommunication between the force under McDowell and that under Banks.

Banks, however, was extremely unwilling to retreat. He was a civilian, possessed of some familiarity with militia organization,—in fact he had done a good deal, when Governor of Massachusetts, to put the militia of that State on a sound footing,—and he was a brave and even a pugnacious man. He wanted nothing better than to fight a battle. He knew little about the theory or practice of war, but he was always ready for a fight. Unfortunately, in an emergency of this kind, his stolid courage was not only out of place, but it imperilled the safety of his command.

General Lee, who was at this time in general charge of the military operations of the Confederacy, recognized fully that the real danger lay in a movement upon Richmond by the force under General McDowell. Federal troops were arriving near Fredericksburg in the latter part of April in considerable numbers; and it was a serious question with General Lee whether it would not be best to attempt to defeat them.³ On the other hand, Lee saw that “to

¹ 18 W. R., 122.

² At this time, however, the road was not completed beyond Front Royal, which was about a mile south of the main line, and connected with it by a branch railroad.

³ Jackson to Lee, 18 W. R., 863; Lee to Jackson, *Ib.*, 865; Lee to Ewell, *Ib.*, 866.

strike a speedy blow at Banks" would "tend to relieve the pressure on Fredericksburg."¹ Jackson, who was directly opposed to Banks, although he somewhat exaggerated the strength of Banks's army, was in favor of an attempt to drive Banks from the Valley. He wrote to Lee on the 28th of April,² asking for 5000 more men, and saying: "Now, it appears to me, is the golden opportunity." On the next day he laid his plans before Lee,³ and that officer, while feeling compelled to deny him the reinforcements he desired, saw that the end which he had in view could be gained in this way, and accordingly authorized him to make use of the troops of Ewell and Johnson, and to proceed as he might think best.⁴ At this time, May 1st, Johnston was still holding McClellan before the lines of Yorktown, and Richmond could not be considered as being in immediate danger.

Jackson's first movement was intended to disembarass himself of Milroy's force. Bringing Ewell up to Swift Run Gap to watch Banks, he himself, by a skilfully contrived movement which was well calculated to conceal his real object, marched by way of Conrad's Store, Port Republic, and Brown's Gap to Mechum's Station on the Virginia Central Railroad, on the east side of the Blue Ridge, whence he proceeded by rail to Staunton, which place he reached on May 4th. Here he was joined by the brigade of General Edward Johnson. He then

¹ Lee to Ewell, 18 W. R., 859; Lee to Jackson, *Ib.*, 859.

² Jackson to Lee, *Ib.*, 870.

³ *Ib.*, 872.

⁴ *Ib.*, 875, 878.

marched on McDowell, where Milroy's brigade, now reinforced by that of Schenck, awaited him, and a smart action was fought on the 8th. The Federal generals tried to overwhelm the advance-guard of Jackson's forces, but were finally compelled to retire, having, however, inflicted a severer loss on their antagonists than that which they themselves suffered.¹ Schenck, who was in command, "fell back by gradual stages to Franklin, taking advantage of the rugged country to hold the pursuers in check."² Jackson followed him as far as that place, but finding Frémont in force and well posted, he gave up further efforts in this direction, and, on May 12th, fell back to McDowell, and from thence to Lebanon Springs, where a road to Harrisonburg branches off from the road to Staunton. Here he rested a day, and, on the 17th, began his march towards Harrisonburg.

By these operations Jackson had, for the time being, got rid of Frémont's interference with his projected movement against Banks. It is true, he had not defeated, still less broken up, any part of Frémont's forces. The conduct of the Federal generals and of their troops had been in every way satisfactory and creditable, and quite as successful as could have been expected. Still, for the present, the way was open for an attack on Banks's isolated column; and, in the meantime, fortune had interposed to favor Jackson's projects.

When Jackson began his march against Milroy, Banks had a force of some 19,000 men. But now,

¹ Allan's *Jackson*, 78, n.

² *Ib.*, 79.

while Jackson was pursuing Schenck and Milroy into the mountains, Shields's division of 11,000 men¹ had been taken from Banks's command, and sent to Fredericksburg. Banks in fact had at Strasburg, where he arrived on May 13th, only 6800 men, infantry and cavalry, with 16 guns.² Some 1500 more were at and near Front Royal and other stations on the Manassas Gap railroad. Upon these troops Jackson could bring a force of more than double their numbers. It required no special military aptitude to seize such an opportunity as this. Jackson in fact aimed at nothing less than capturing Banks's entire command.

When Jackson left Swift Run Gap, Ewell, as we have seen, occupied it, to guard against any offensive movement which might be undertaken by Banks; and when Jackson retired from Franklin he ordered Ewell forward, so that they might join forces on the Valley turnpike, and together overwhelm Banks. On his arrival at New Market on May 20th, Jackson was joined by one brigade of Ewell's division. But here the Confederate general, with an astuteness which merits all praise, left the Shenandoah Valley turnpike, and on the 21st, turning abruptly to the right, crossed the Massanutton Mountain and the South Fork of the Shenandoah into the Page or Luray Valley, through which the Federal general had not expected his adversary to advance. At the bridge he found Ewell's other brigades. The march was resumed on the 22d, and the neighborhood of Front Royal was reached that evening. Here Colo-

¹ 18 W. R., 134.

² 15 W. R., 524.

nel Kenly was stationed, with the 1st Maryland regiment of nearly a thousand men, guarding the station of the Manassas Gap railroad, and the bridge which carries it over the Shenandoah River. Jackson's march had not only been made swiftly, but secretly. No Federal pickets had been encountered. The duty of watching the Luray Valley appears to have been utterly neglected.

On the 23d the Confederates advanced, and in the afternoon made their dispositions for the attack. Kenly at first attempted to hold his ground, but, finding himself largely outnumbered, had no resource but to abandon the post, which with a large amount of stores fell into the hands of the enemy. His command retired on the road to Winchester, but was headed off by the Confederate cavalry, and, on their infantry coming up, nearly the entire force was captured.

Banks had expected that Jackson would move upon him, but he certainly did not anticipate the celerity and secrecy which characterized this rapid advance of his antagonist. On the 22d he wrote to the Secretary of War,¹ stating his situation fully, and expressing his inability to hold his position with his present force. On the evening of the 23d he learned at Strasburg of the disaster which had befallen Kenly at Front Royal. Early in the morning of the 24th he proposed to "stand firm,"² but, shortly after, he became satisfied that he could not hold Strasburg,³ and he fell back towards Winchester with his trains. Jackson, moving from Front

¹ 15 W. R., 524.

² *Ib.*, 526.

³ *Ib.*, 527.

Royal, was on his flank, and made every exertion to reach the turnpike before him; but so exhausted were his troops with their long and rapid marches, that the whole of Banks's column preceded the pursuing Confederates, who managed only to pick up a few wagons and stragglers. Even this might have been prevented if Banks had not, with foolhardy obstinacy, refused to credit the information brought him, and to take the advice of those educated officers who (like Gordon, commanding one of his brigades) urged him in the evening of the 23d to fall back to Winchester with all speed. Banks was indeed loath to retreat.¹ But circumstances were too much for him, and he finally gave the order, just in time to save his command from being destroyed by the superior forces with which Jackson was hurrying forward to cut him off. On the evening of the 24th the rear-guard of the Federal army was hard pressed by the Confederates under Jackson himself, but Gordon's brigade repulsed every attack with admirable steadiness and coolness.²

The next morning, the 25th, at Winchester, Banks, instead of continuing his retreat, which he was strongly urged to do,³ and although he was perfectly aware that "the enemy's force was overwhelming,"⁴ "determined [to use his own language] to test the substance and strength of the enemy by actual collision," and made his dispositions on the heights south of the town to receive Jackson's attack. His

¹ See Gordon, 191-193.

² *Ib.*, 219-224; Allan's *Jackson*, 107.

³ Gordon, 225.

⁴ Banks's Report, 15 W. R., 549. See Gordon, 248, 249.

force consisted of about 6500 men of all arms. It made a gallant defence, but the Confederate superiority in numbers was too great to admit of doing more than holding the position for a few hours. Finally the Federal right was turned, and the soldiers of Banks were obliged to abandon their position. In tolerable order they made the best of their way through the streets of Winchester; then, in a state of considerable disorganization, they retreated to Martinsburg, reaching it that afternoon. After a brief rest the troops resumed their march for the Potomac, which was crossed at Williamsport without interruption during the early morning hours of the 26th.

There was no pursuit worth speaking of. Jackson's infantry were too much fatigued with their previous marches, and perhaps with the labors of the battle, where also their loss had been considerable, to press with any vigor upon the Federal rear-guard. His cavalry lost valuable time through the fault of their commander,¹ and accomplished little. Only the stragglers were picked up.

On the afternoon of the 25th, Jackson "placed his army in camp at Stephenson's, five miles north of Winchester."² Here he remained until the morning of the 28th, when he pushed a small force upon Charlestown. On the 29th he moved forward with his whole army to Halltown, and menaced Harper's Ferry. He had found at Winchester large quantities of small arms, ammunition, medical stores, and other

¹ 15 W. R., 706. See Allan's *Jackson*, 115.

² Allan's *Jackson*, 123.

supplies, and it took several days to make up the trains in which these acquisitions could be transported, and to get the convoys fairly started for the South. He may also have thought that, by threatening an invasion of Maryland and the North, he would induce the Federal Government to change its plans for the uninterrupted prosecution of the campaign against Richmond.¹

But, in point of fact, this object had been, unknown to him, already attained. President Lincoln and his Secretary of War, when they heard of Jackson's advance down the Valley and attack on the Federal force at Front Royal, ordered McDowell, on the afternoon of May 24th, "laying aside for the present the movement on Richmond, to put 20,000 men in motion at once for the Shenandoah, moving on the line or in advance of the line of the Manassas Gap railroad," with the object of capturing the forces of Jackson and Ewell.² Similar orders were at the same time sent by telegraph to Frémont, who was at Franklin, and who was not only "directed to move against Jackson at Harrisonburg, and operate against the enemy in such way as to relieve Banks,"³—a movement obviously called for under the circumstances,—but was informed on the next day⁴ that the object was "to cut off and capture this rebel force in the Shenandoah." McClellan was notified,⁵ on the 24th, that the President had suspended McDowell's movements to join him.

¹ Allan's *Jackson*, 124, citing Dabney's *Life of Jackson*, 386. There are apparently no despatches or letters bearing on this point in the War Records.

² 18 W. R., 219. ³ 15 W. R., 643. ⁴ *Ib.*, 644. ⁵ 12 W. R., 30.

It is to be observed that this substitution of a scheme for the capture of Jackson's force in place of the plan of uniting McDowell's command to the Army of the Potomac¹ was adopted on the day before the battle of Winchester, and five days before Jackson's main force made its appearance near Harper's Ferry.² It is therefore not correct to say that the action taken by Mr. Lincoln in thus abandoning, for the time being, the plan of overwhelming the Confederate force at Richmond by the union of McDowell's 40,000 men to the army of General McClellan was induced by "Jackson's apparition at Winchester and his sudden advance to Harper's Ferry."³ The President's decision was formed before these events took place; and while it is no doubt true that "a desperate push upon Harper's Ferry" was apprehended,⁴ the character of the movements prescribed to McDowell and Frémont shows conclusively that their object was nothing less than the capture of the daring Confederate general. For the defence of the line of the Potomac, troops were ordered from Baltimore and other places. To ensure Jackson's withdrawal from the frontier it was simply necessary to order Frémont to move into the Valley. It is, in truth, only too plain that the administration thought that there was a chance here for a very pretty strategical operation, which was in their judgment likely to result in an important success. The motive was, in fact, similar to that which

¹ *Ante*, 112.

² Jackson's Report, 15 W. R., 707.

³ Swinton, 125; Webb, 92.

⁴ Lincoln to McClellan, 12 W. R., 30.

had, in March, induced Mr. Lincoln to detach Blenker's division from McClellan's army and give it to Frémont, to enable him to capture Knoxville.¹

The new scheme found no favor among the military men. McClellan, as was but natural, was bitterly opposed to it, although he refrained from sending in any remonstrance. McDowell did not try to conceal his amazement and regret. "The President's order," wrote he to the Secretary, "is a crushing blow to us."² He explained to the President that, so far as helping Banks was concerned, "no celerity or vigor" would "avail" anything. He pointed out that "the line of retreat of" Jackson's "forces up the Valley" was shorter than his to go against him. "I feel," said he, "that it throws us all back, and from Richmond north we shall have all our large masses paralyzed, and shall have to repeat what we have just accomplished."³ Frémont, short of supplies, in a country where the mountain roads had been rendered almost impassable by a protracted storm, was in no condition to move at any unusual rate of speed. The direct road to Harrisonburg had been obstructed by Jackson when he fell back from Franklin on the 12th of May. The only road open to Frémont was by way of Petersburg and Moorefield, involving a long *détour* to the north, and this would bring him on the Valley turnpike at Strasburg and not at Harrisonburg.⁴ It was

¹ See Part I., 255, n. 2.

² 18 W. R., 220.

³ *Ib.*, 220. See also his letter to Wadsworth,—18 W. R., 221,—in reply to Wadsworth's to him of the 23d, *Ib.*, 216.

⁴ Frémont's Report, 15 W. R., 10, 11; Schurz to Lincoln, 18 W. R., 379; Lincoln to Frémont, 15 W. R., 644; Frémont to Lincoln, *Ib.*, 644, 645.

no doubt good policy to order Frémont to the Valley ; this was certain to bring about the retreat of Jackson ; but as for the task of capturing Jackson's force in concert with McDowell, to which Frémont was so hastily and thoughtlessly assigned, it was one of enormous difficulty.

But Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Stanton were not in the mood for taking advice from the generals. They got Mr. Chase, the Secretary of the Treasury, to proceed to Fredericksburg, and "explain the grounds of the President's order" to General McDowell,¹ and, probably, to give that officer the benefit of his knowledge of strategy and his military experience. McDowell, however, did not care for these explanations. He knew his duty as a soldier, and promptly obeyed his orders.

The "fortune of war" for a time seemed to favor this unpromising scheme. The facts were precisely as McDowell and Frémont had stated them ; the distances were as great, the roads were as bad, the difficulties of transportation and supply over cross-country and mountainous paths were as formidable as had been represented. But Jackson's inaction gave the scheme a chance of success. He was resting his troops at Halltown, and making a feeble demonstration against Harper's Ferry. It was not until the evening of the 29th that he heard of Frémont's march towards Strasburg, and not until the next day that intelligence reached him of the movement of McDowell towards Front Royal.² On that day he retired to Winchester with his main

¹ 18 W. R., 220, 228-230.

² Allan's *Jackson*, 130, n.

body. Here he was eighteen miles from Strasburg. But his rear-guard was twenty-five miles behind. The van of McDowell's force under Shields had at that moment captured Front Royal, which is twelve miles east of Strasburg, and Frémont was at Wardensville, only twenty miles away to the westward.¹ Jackson was unquestionably in a position of great danger. But Shields occupied precious time in posting his troops to resist possible attacks when he should have moved forward, and Frémont was delayed by the fatigue of his men, by bad roads, and by stormy weather. Neither of the Federal generals was informed of the positions of the enemy or of the whereabouts of the co-operating force. Jackson, on his part, displayed the most untiring energy and unfaltering decision, and, having also the undisturbed possession of the admirable Valley turnpike, succeeded, on June 1st, in making good his retreat from Strasburg between the two Federal armies.

Frémont decided to pursue the enemy up the Shenandoah Valley. McDowell ordered Shields to march by the Luray Valley, the road through which—a very bad one—ran on the easterly side of the South Fork of the Shenandoah. By destroying the bridges over this river Jackson prevented the Federal columns from uniting with each other until at least fifty miles had been traversed by them. He himself retired by the Valley turnpike, and his cavalry, under the celebrated Ashby, retarded the Federal pursuit by every means in their power. Finally,

¹ Allan's *Jackson*, 131, 132.

on June 8th, at a place called Cross Keys, Jackson halted to accept battle from Frémont, who had followed closely behind him. The brigades of Tyler and Carroll, of Shields's division, had arrived on the opposite side of the river at the little town of Port Republic, but were powerless to assist their allies, as Jackson had secured, after a sharp skirmish with Carroll, the only bridge which could connect the operations of the two Federal armies. Frémont's attack at Cross Keys was fierce, but not well sustained, and it did not succeed.

Had Shields's division been concentrated at Port Republic, it is quite possible that a junction might have been effected between it and Frémont's army. But Shields had halted half of his command at Columbia Bridge, to guard against a possible irruption into the Valley by Longstreet,—a report that such a move was contemplated having been too easily credited by him.¹ When Shields heard of Carroll's affair at the bridge he ordered him and Tyler back as far as Conrad's Store, and he himself marched thither as rapidly as he could from Luray.² Tyler, however, who commanded, was not quick enough in making his arrangements to retire³; and seeing the enemy moving on him, decided to hold his ground. The Confederates advanced in haste, and at first in insufficient force, and Tyler's men, being well posted and withal excellent troops, repulsed them with severe loss. Finally, however, the advent of reinforcements to his opponents obliged the Federal commander to withdraw, which he did in good

¹ 15 W. R., 686.² *Ib.*, 687.³ *Ib.*, 696.

order and condition. Had the rest of Shields's division been present, Jackson's attack would in all probability have failed. This affair, which took place on June 9th, is known as the battle of Port Republic.

Both these actions were obstinately contested; and the success gained by Jackson in them was due rather to the skilful use which he made of his central position, than to any particular merit in his tactical dispositions.

Here ended the pursuit of Jackson. Shields's division retired to Front Royal, and was subsequently brought back to Manassas. Frémont fell back to Mount Jackson on the Valley turnpike.¹

It is clear from the foregoing narrative that, had President Lincoln refrained from interfering, McDowell, whose march from Fredericksburg upon Richmond had been fixed for the 26th of May, could have effected his purpose of uniting his corps of 40,000 men to the Army of the Potomac without other opposition than could have been offered by Anderson's brigade,² supported, so far as General Johnston thought advisable, by troops from the main Confederate army covering Richmond; and it will hardly be contended that the union of the Federal armies could have been prevented. That this concentration of 150,000 men in the immediate vicinity of Richmond would have compelled its speedy evacuation, is certainly very probable. It was, at any rate, obviously the true course for the Federal authorities to take. That this course was not taken

¹ I C. W., 1863, 266.

² *Ante*, 112.

was due entirely to the action of President Lincoln, who, contrary to the urgent remonstrances of the generals charged with the conduct of operations against Richmond, broke up deliberately one of the most promising combinations for the defeat of the Confederates and the capture of their capital that fortune was ever likely to afford to the Federal cause. In this course the President was sustained by two members at least of his Cabinet, Mr. Stanton and Mr. Chase.

To return now to the Peninsula. While the operations above described had been going on in the Shenandoah Valley, Johnston had leisurely fallen back to the neighborhood of Richmond, followed, still more leisurely, by McClellan. Between May 20th and 24th, Keyes's corps, the 4th, crossed the Chickahominy by the ford near Bottom's Bridge, which the enemy had destroyed. The 3d corps soon followed, under Heintzelman, and the bridge was immediately rebuilt. The other three corps, the 2d, 5th, and 6th,¹ took position on the north side of the Chickahominy, the 5th under Fitz John Porter, in advance, then the 6th under Franklin, then the 2d under Sumner. Trestle-bridges were immediately commenced, and rapidly pushed to completion, to establish free communication between these corps and the 3d and 4th corps, under Heintzelman and Keyes. The Federal army was thus divided by the Chickahominy, a stream insignificant in itself, but which was often swelled by

¹ The 5th and 6th corps were organized about May 15th. See Webb, 84, n.

rains so as to overflow its bed and to flood the marshy and boggy land through which it flowed. It constituted, in fact, a very formidable obstruction to the intercommunication which ought always to exist without possibility of interruption between all parts of an army in the field.¹

Although the full extent of this danger could not have been appreciated by General McClellan when he first took up his position athwart the Chickahominy, there is no doubt that he realized, to a certain extent, the disadvantages of this course, and that he would have preferred to establish his base of supplies on the James River.² But the Government refused to allow McDowell to join McClellan by water, and insisted on his marching on Richmond by way of the Richmond and Fredericksburg Railroad.³ This obliged McClellan, when he approached Richmond, to take up a position on both sides of the Chickahominy, so that he might extend his right wing to co-operate with McDowell's advancing column; and now, although McDowell had been sent off to the Shenandoah Valley, McClellan made no change in his arrangements. The base of the army was established at White House, on the Pamunkey, up to which point that river was navigable for vessels bringing supplies; and from thence the Richmond and York River Railroad was made use of to convey them to the army.

These arrangements were sufficiently convenient, but they were not as secure from the interference of

¹ 12 W. R., 25. Cf. 1 M. H. S. M., 176.

² 12 W. R., 28.

³ *Ib.*, 27.

the enemy as was desirable ; and General McClellan determined to send out an expeditionary force to clear the region north of the Chickahominy and east of the Virginia Central Railroad. General Fitz-John Porter was entrusted with this task, and on the 27th of May he performed it to the entire satisfaction of the general commanding, having routed near Hanover Court House the brigade of the Confederate general, Branch, and inflicted on it severe loss in killed, wounded, and prisoners. This success rendered McClellan's communications secure for the moment, and he seems to have thought no more, for the time being at any rate, of establishing his army on the James.¹

The advance of the Army of the Potomac to the immediate neighborhood of Richmond had long been considered by its commander as certain to involve a great battle. As early as the 19th of March McClellan had written² to the Secretary of War that he expected to fight a decisive battle between West Point and Richmond, to give which battle the enemy would concentrate all their available forces. On the 10th of May he again wrote to Mr. Stanton:

“ From the information reaching me from every source, I regard it as certain that the enemy will meet me with all his force on or near the Chickahominy. . . . I shall fight the rebel army with whatever force I may have, but duty requires me to urge that every effort be made to reinforce me without delay with all the disposable troops in eastern Virginia, and that we concentrate all our forces as

¹ See Note 2 at the end of this chapter.

² 5 W. R., 57.

fast as possible to fight the great battle now impending, and to make it decisive. It is possible that the enemy may abandon Richmond without a serious struggle, but I do not believe he will, and it would be unwise to count upon anything but a stubborn and desperate defence, a life-and-death contest. I see no other hope for him than to fight this battle, and we must win it. . . . Those who entertain the opinion that the rebels will abandon Richmond without a struggle are, in my judgment, badly advised, and do not comprehend their situation, which is one requiring desperate measures.”¹

On the other side, Johnston, as we have seen,² had, about the middle of April, not only strongly recommended retaining the bulk of the Confederate army near Richmond, where it would not be subjected to unnecessary losses, but also augmenting it with all the available force of the Confederacy. On the very same day on which McClellan wrote his letter to Stanton, Johnston wrote to Lee, who, under Davis, had the general charge of the military operations in the Confederacy :

“If the President will direct the concentration of all the troops of North Carolina and eastern Virginia, we may be able to hold middle Virginia at least. If we permit ourselves to be driven beyond Richmond, we lose the means of maintaining this army.”³

Neither of the rival commanders obtained what

¹ 12 W. R., 26.

² *Ante*, 109.

³ 14 W. R., 506; *ante*, 114. Cf. Johnston's *Narrative*, 113, 127, 142.

he asked for, because neither of them possessed the confidence of his Government. President Lincoln, as we have seen, diverted McDowell's corps to the Shenandoah Valley. President Davis declined to order to Richmond the forces defending the cities of the Atlantic and Gulf coasts.¹ But the situation was a far more urgent one for the defenders than for the assailants of the Confederate capital. It might reasonably be expected that when the Shenandoah Valley campaign should be terminated, McClellan would receive the reinforcements he demanded, and in the meantime he was presumably strong enough to maintain his position. For the same reason it was obviously Johnston's policy to fight his adversary at once, if he proposed fighting him at all; and the situation of the Federal army on both banks of the Chickahominy offered to him a tempting opportunity.

Johnston, as we need hardly say, had kept himself informed of McDowell's movements. So long as it was reported that that officer was about to move southward, Johnston had revolved in his mind and almost brought to a head a plan for an attack on that part of McClellan's army which lay north of the Chickahominy River, but as soon as he found that McDowell had moved off to the Valley, he abandoned this scheme, and devoted himself to the more obvious and also more feasible project of destroying the two Federal corps, the 3d and 4th, which McClellan had pushed across the Chickahominy and had caused to take position within a few miles

¹ Johnston's *Narrative*, 127.

of Richmond.¹ Of these troops, the 4th corps, under Keyes, was in the advance. Casey's division occupied some rifle-pits and a redoubt about three quarters of a mile west of Seven Pines, a tavern on the Williamsburg Stage road. The other division, under Couch, was a little to the right and rear of Casey's. Heintzelman's corps, the 3d, had not advanced much beyond the Chickahominy. In fact Hooker's division was guarding White Oak Bridge and the passes of White Oak Swamp lying to the southward, and the division of Kearny was at Bottom's Bridge. Kearny was more than five miles from Casey's advanced line, and Hooker more than seven miles from it. Each of these four divisions numbered about 8500 men.² It is apparent that General Heintzelman, who was in command of both corps, had not sufficiently concentrated the force at his disposal.

The ground to the south of the Williamsburg road was swampy, and protected, partially, at least, the left of the Federal lines. But that to the north of the road, up as far as Fair Oaks Station on the York River railroad, was practicable. At Fair Oaks there was a battery and two regiments of Couch's division, protecting a depot of supplies at that place.

An opportunity was thus presented to the Confederate general of overwhelming by superior numbers the corps of Keyes, before it could be supported by that of Heintzelman. The latter corps, moreover, was certain to be drawn into the action, and it

¹ See Map V., facing page 156.

² 14 W. R., 204; Smith, 172. But see 12 W. R., 753, 881. 917.

was more than likely that it would find it impossible to maintain itself after the 4th corps had been routed. It was, no doubt, to be expected that General McClellan would throw the 2d corps across the river, to operate on the left of the advancing Confederates, and thus render it impracticable for them to press their advantage to its natural result; but a rain-storm of extraordinary violence, which began on the afternoon of the 30th and continued all night, swelled the Chickahominy to such an extent that it became unfordable,¹ and that McClellan's recently constructed bridges were rendered unsafe for the passage of troops and guns.

Johnston's plan of attack was a simple and effective one. Three roads run eastward from Richmond. The northern one, called the New Bridge or the Nine-Mile road, runs east about five miles to a place called Old Tavern, where it branches,—one branch running north about a mile and a half to New Bridge, and the other running southeast about the same distance to Fair Oaks Station on the Richmond and York River railroad. The next road, which is between one and two miles south of, and generally parallel to, the Nine-Mile road, is the Williamsburg Stage road. Between these roads runs the Richmond and York River railroad. South of the Williamsburg road, and trending to the southeast, is the Charles City road. Between these two last-mentioned roads the country was in many places rough, swampy, extremely difficult for the passage of infantry, and well-nigh impracticable for

¹ Johnston to Smith, 14 W. R., 563.

artillery. Cavalry could not be employed in this region with any effect.

Johnston's original plan¹ was to push out one column, consisting of the six brigades of Longstreet's division, about 14,000 men,² on the New Bridge road; another column, consisting of the four brigades of D. H. Hill's division, about 9500 men,³ on the Williamsburg road; and another, consisting of the three brigades of Huger's division, about 5000 men,⁴ on the Charles City road. Johnston expected, by using both the Nine-Mile road and the Williamsburg Stage road, to concentrate a large force,—ten brigades,—say 23,500 men,—in front and a little to the north of the Federal troops, numbering about 16,000 or 17,000 men, at Fair Oaks and Seven Pines. The troops on the Charles City road, about 5000 men, under Huger, he proposed should advance until they reached a point where they could, by crossing the intervening space, assist their comrades who were fighting north of them. He also proposed to advance a strong column consisting of five brigades under Whiting, to follow Longstreet's division⁵ on the Nine-Mile road to the point (Old Tavern) where the road to New Bridge branches off, so as to be able to fend off any attempt on the part of any Federal troops, who might cross the Chickahominy by Sumner's bridges, to march to the relief of their comrades on the south side of the river. This division of Whiting could also, if occasion re-

¹ See Smith, 18-22.

² 14 W. R., 530.

³ *Ib.*, 531.

⁴ Smith, 173.

⁵ Mason to Whiting, 14 W. R., 564.

quired, be sent to reinforce Longstreet, and its place could be taken by the reserve division of Magruder, consisting of six brigades. General G. W. Smith was put in general charge of this portion of the army.

Johnston regarded it as so certain that he would be able to concentrate an overwhelming force on the advance lines of the Union troops, that he determined to entrust to Longstreet the general management of the attack, and to station himself on the left, near the New Bridge road, where he could better supervise the task of preventing any attack upon Longstreet by Federal troops coming from the north side of the river.¹

However promising General Johnston's plan of battle was, it needed for its successful accomplishment that the clearest and most positive instructions should be issued to those entrusted with its execution. The battle was to be an offensive one; the movements by which the troops were to be brought upon the ground were to be combined movements of columns separated from each other by woods and swamps; the officers who were to conduct these operations, although they had been in service for a twelvemonth, were new to the business of carrying out such co-operative movements. Hence it would have been only common prudence to issue written orders, and to make them as full and in as great detail as the nature of the case admitted. And, what was as important as anything else, especially considering that at that period the Confederate army had not been organized into corps, all questions of

¹ Johnston's *Narrative*, 134; Smith, 26.

relative authority should have been definitely settled beforehand. But Johnston's instructions to Longstreet were verbal only¹; and that officer, as Johnston soon discovered,² misunderstood them in at least one most important respect. Moreover, in the only two orders which Huger received, nothing was said about his being placed under Longstreet,³ and this question of command had to be settled between them on the very morning of the battle.⁴ The orders to Huger, which are dated on the 30th, it must also be noted, contain no intimation that a general battle was to be fought the next day; there is merely the remark that, if he, Huger, should find no strong body in his front, it would be well to aid General Hill, if he should be engaged on Huger's left.

Longstreet's whole division of six brigades was, on the night of May 30th, either just to the north of the New Bridge road, or on it, and could, with perfect ease, have marched out to Old Tavern and Fair Oaks early the next morning. Instead of doing this, Longstreet, having misunderstood his orders, moved all his division south, to the junction of the Williamsburg and Charles City roads. Here he had a conference with Huger, and apparently assumed control of his movements, but evidently failed to give him definite instructions.⁵ Three brigades of his own division,

¹ Longstreet's Report, 12 W. R., 939; Johnston's *Narrative*, 133.

² Johnston to Smith, June 28, 1862, in Smith, 19. Longstreet in his book does not state explicitly what his orders were.

³ 12 W. R., 937, 938.

⁴ *Ib.*, 942.

⁵ *Ib.*, 937, 938, 942. For a discussion of Huger's operations, see Smith, 64 *et seq.* Longstreet says in his book that Huger ranked him, but refused to take command of the right wing. Longstreet, 91, 92.

under Wilcox, Longstreet placed on the Charles City road, where Huger's three brigades already were, and from which they could reach the scene of the expected action only by making a difficult march over swampy and treacherous ground. Why this disposition was made does not appear.¹ To D. H. Hill's four brigades was assigned the task of leading the attack on the Williamsburg road. They were supported by the brigades of R. H. Anderson (commanded by Jenkins) and Kemper, both under R. H. Anderson. The other brigade of Longstreet's division, Pickett's, he kept in reserve. Of the thirteen brigades under his control, therefore, he proposed to put only six in action at the outset.

These arrangements were obviously very faulty; and when it is added that Longstreet delayed making the attack until after 1 P.M., it is plain enough that he showed himself unequal to the task of utilizing the large force which the commanding general had placed at his disposal.²

Soon after one o'clock, D. H. Hill's division "moved

¹ Longstreet's Report, 12 W. R., 940; Wilcox's Report, *ib.*, 986. Longstreet says in his book (p. 92) that he gave these three brigades to Huger, "the better to harmonize"—surely a very extraordinary reason.

² The delay was caused, so Longstreet and Hill say, by waiting for Huger; but it is not alleged by Longstreet that he gave any orders to Huger. Johnston says that "Longstreet, unwilling to make a partial attack, instead of the combined movement which had been planned, waited from hour to hour for General Huger's division." But the first order which Johnston had given Huger simply directed him "to be ready, *if an action should be begun on* " *his* " *left*, to fall upon the enemy's left flank" (12 W. R., 938); and this was followed by a second order stating that the first one was of "too positive" a character. These orders, taken together, show clearly that it was for Huger to wait for Longstreet, not for Longstreet to wait for Huger. The treatment of Huger by Johnston and Longstreet seems to us, we are constrained to say, anything but fair. See Wilcox's postscript to his Report, 12 W. R., 989.

off," as that officer says in his Report, "in fine style." They drove in the pickets of Casey's division and their supports without difficulty; and on being checked at the first line of works, west of Seven Pines, Hill promptly sent one of his brigades—Rains's—to the south of the road, thus taking the Federal troops in flank, and compelling the evacuation of the lines. The task of the Confederates in this part of the battle was the easier, because eight of the thirteen regiments of Casey's division were "raw" regiments.¹ The other five, however, composing the brigade of Naglee, constituted a serviceable organization, and many of the "raw" troops behaved creditably. The ground was difficult, and the Confederate troops, though led with great energy and displaying great gallantry, could make but slow progress. Couch's division was brought up to the support of Casey's, and the contest was maintained with great obstinacy by these troops for some hours. Finally, however, the centre of the line was broken,² and Couch himself, with four regiments, was separated from the main body and obliged to retire to Fair Oaks, where he joined the troops stationed there, and fell back towards Sumner's bridges, in hopes of being joined by a portion of the 2d corps. The fighting went on without interruption on the Williamsburg road, the divisions of Casey and Couch being at last supported by one of the divisions of the 3d corps under Kearny. This reinforcement re-established for a time the Federal line of battle; and Berry's brigade, advancing on the south of the road, by taking

¹ 12 W. R., 755, 916.

² *Ib.*, 880.

the Confederates in flank, compelled them to retire with loss. Hill then applied to Longstreet for assistance, and the latter sent him R. H. Anderson's brigade of two regiments. With this assistance the Federal line was finally driven back. Their troops bivouacked for the night at a point about a mile and a half east of Seven Pines, and the fight on the Williamsburg road was ended somewhere about half-past six o'clock in the evening.

But this long, obstinate, and bloody contest was not all of the battle of Fair Oaks. When Couch with his four regiments and one battery was forced away from his command and obliged to retire towards the bridges which Sumner had thrown across the Chickahominy, he had not to wait long for assistance. Sumner, one of the most gallant and energetic officers in the Federal army, having received orders at 1 P.M. to be in readiness to cross the river, moved at once down to the bridges, and, at 2.30 P.M., crossed the river with Sedgwick's division and Kirby's battery on what was known as Sumner's Upper Bridge, and marched directly to the scene of action. The bridge was very unsteady, and it took a long time for the troops to cross it. The road on the south side of the river was exceedingly bad, and in spite of the ardor of the men and the energy of the commanding general, progress over the miry and boggy ground was necessarily very slow. It was not until after five o'clock that Sedgwick's division reached the neighborhood of Fair Oaks Station.

It so happened that just about this time Johnston, having received advices from Longstreet requesting

assistance in order to complete his victory on the Williamsburg road, had determined to send him Whiting's division. These troops, on moving south or southeast towards the scene of Longstreet's fight, were greeted by a cannonade coming from a point to the north or northeast of their position. All of Whiting's division, except the brigade of Hood, which pursued its march with the object of connecting with and assisting Longstreet, were halted to make head against this new enemy. Thinking that their adversaries could be none other than the few regiments under Couch which had been cut off from the main body of the 4th Federal corps, the fresh troops of Whiting attacked them fiercely. They little suspected the truth. Johnston himself, as he frankly admits, did not suspect it. He says¹ that he was confident that the Federal troops opposing his were those whose camps he had just passed, and therefore could not have come from the north side of the Chickahominy. But Whiting's men soon found that they had to deal with a formidable force. Their charges were repulsed with great loss. Of their four brigadiers, Hatton was killed, Hampton wounded, Pettigrew wounded and taken prisoner. The men of Sedgwick's division were well handled, and came into action with that high and determined spirit which usually accompanies troops who believe that it is upon their arrival in time and their boldness in action that the fate of the day depends. They not only repulsed all attacks made upon them, but, at the close of the engagement, by a gallant and successful

¹ Johnston's *Narrative*, 137, 138.

charge, acquired the right to call the field their own.

About seven o'clock General Johnston was severely wounded, and Major-General Gustavus W. Smith succeeded him in the command of the Confederate army. But before this happened, Johnston had announced ¹ to his officers that the battle was over for the day. It was, in fact, too dark for either side to undertake further operations. We are, therefore, warranted in considering the battle of May 31st as having been fully finished before the Confederate general was disabled. But if we would obtain a correct idea of the battle of May 31st, we must go on, and see in what condition both armies were on the morning of June 1st. The fighting on that day throws much light on this matter.

General G. W. Smith, on whom, as we have seen, the command of the Confederate army devolved after General Johnston had been wounded and obliged to leave the field, naturally desired to continue the battle. He ordered Longstreet, whose troops had been so successful the day before, to renew the engagement, and to direct his attack towards the north, that is, towards the railroad, instead of pushing farther east, towards Bottom's Bridge. This would bring Longstreet's troops in contact with Richardson's division of Sumner's corps (which had crossed the afternoon before, but had not got into action), supported by Birney's brigade of Kearny's division of the 3d corps. This movement was to be supported, so soon as it should be fully developed,

¹ Johnston's *Narrative*, 138.

by an attack by Whiting's division ¹ (aided, if necessary, by troops from Magruder's division) upon Sedgwick's division of Sumner's corps and the small force under Couch.

These orders were probably the best the circumstances admitted of. The division of Whiting, which had lost heavily the evening before,—three out of the four brigadiers in action having been killed or wounded,—was assuredly not the force which an experienced officer would select to initiate the battle of the morning. It was known that only a part of Longstreet's command had been engaged the day before; that the three brigades under Huger, the three under Wilcox, and Pickett's brigade had, as yet, hardly fired a shot, and it was presumed that the division of D. H. Hill, though it had suffered greatly, was elated by its success. Then, as to the direction of Longstreet's attack, it would seem, on the whole, that Smith correctly indicated it. The Federal division of Richardson, which (strengthened by Birney's brigade) connected on its right with that of Sedgwick, and was on the line of the railroad, faced south or nearly south; it was therefore in a position to flank any movement which Longstreet might make towards the defeated troops of Keyes's corps in the direction of Bottom's Bridge; while Smith, whose available force under Whiting was held in check by Sedgwick's division, was manifestly unable to support any such movement should it be made. In fact the connection between the right wing and centre of the Confederate army was none too close

¹ Smith, 129.

as it was.¹ Smith, therefore, it would seem, was right in ordering Longstreet to commence the battle of June 1st by an attack on the Federal force on the line of the railroad, even although Longstreet's right might be assailed by the defeated troops of the 4th corps.²

Longstreet's performance of his orders on this morning of June 1st was singularly lacking in energy and dash. Huger's division, or at least Armistead's and Mahone's brigades of that division, together with Pickett's brigade, attacked Richardson, and, after an hour's heavy firing, were repulsed with severe loss; and this movement seems to have been all that was attempted. Longstreet made, in fact, no serious effort to carry the Union lines. He does not, in his Report, even claim to have made an attack, but only to have repelled an attack made upon his position by the Federals.³ In this statement he is in error, for the brigades above mentioned did advance upon the Federal troops; but his language shows conclusively that he had no intention on that morning of taking the offensive, in compliance with his orders. He seems, in fact, to have been laboring under the impression that he was himself in imminent danger of being overwhelmed by a greatly superior force. His notes to Smith during the forenoon are curious reading, considering that the Federal generals were not

¹ Smith to Longstreet; Smith, 134.

² Longstreet, 104.

³ 12 W. R., 940. So Hill in his Report, *ib.*, 945. But see Pickett's Report, *ib.*, 982. Richardson's Report, *ib.*, 766, gives an account of the counter-charge made by the Federal troops after they had repelled the assault on them.

dreaming of attacking their antagonists, but were only anxious to hold their own until the arrival of General McClellan. Longstreet says that all his troops, save one brigade, are engaged in action ; that the entire Federal army seems to be opposed to him ; that unless some diversion is made in his favor, his troops cannot stand the successive attacks of the enemy. An hour later he asks urgently for reinforcements ; says again that the entire Federal army seems to be opposed to him, and that he cannot hold out unless he gets help.¹

These appeals for help induced General Smith to send orders to the troops which were stationed along the upper Chickahominy to march to Longstreet's assistance ; but, believing (as he did) that an attack by Longstreet's command ought to precede any offensive movement of the centre and left of the Confederate army, he remained quiet with Whiting's division until he should hear what Longstreet could accomplish on the right when these fresh troops had reached him.

In this waiting attitude both sides passed the morning of the 1st of June. General McClellan arrived on the ground early in the forenoon, but made no changes in the dispositions of the Federal forces and gave no orders looking to an attack. About two o'clock in the afternoon General Lee arrived at General Smith's headquarters, and, in compliance with an order of President Davis, assumed command of the Confederate army. He allowed the troops to remain where they were dur-

¹ Smith, 135, 136.

ing the remainder of the day, and in the night withdrew them to their former positions in the immediate neighborhood of Richmond.

Thus ended the battle of Fair Oaks, or Seven Pines. It is safe to say that Johnston added nothing to his reputation by his conduct of this affair. The engagement was planned and brought on by him; and while it is true that it was not fought by his chief lieutenant in the way in which he intended it should be fought, it is equally true that the miscarriage of Johnston's plan might easily have been prevented by more explicit instructions and more careful supervision.¹ The 4th corps of the Federal army was so far in advance that it was exposed to an attack by largely superior numbers before it could be supported by the 3d corps, or by any troops which might come from the north side of the Chickahominy. The thirteen brigades which Johnston entrusted to Longstreet were amply sufficient for the task of striking a decisive blow on the isolated corps of Keyes. The means by which Johnston intended that the concentration of this formidable force should be effected were amply sufficient for the purpose. But, owing to Johnston's lack of explicitness and Longstreet's incapacity to see for himself how the desired object could best be accomplished, the concentration of the Confederate forces was never carried out,² and the

¹ Cf. 1 M. H. S. M., 182.

² The orders sent by Longstreet to Wilcox were contradictory, and their execution took so much time that Wilcox's division did not begin to arrive till 5 P.M. Only one regiment appears to have been engaged. As for Huger, he remained on the Charles City road waiting for orders which Longstreet never sent him. See 12 W. R., 938, 986, 989. One of Huger's

blow which fell upon Keyes's corps, instead of being an overwhelming blow, was delivered with such a small force that even that poorly organized body of troops maintained their ground with stubbornness, fell back without general disorganization, and, with the assistance of only one of the divisions of the 3d corps, Kearny's, definitely brought their adversary's success to an end by the close of the afternoon. In other words, while the Federal forces engaged on the Williamsburg road were defeated, they were not routed, as they would very likely have been had Johnston's programme been carried out to the letter. The Confederates captured 10 guns, 6000 muskets, 5 colors, and 347 prisoners,¹ but such a moderate result as this was by no means what had been expected by their commander.

Then, in the action of Fair Oaks, the advent of Sumner at the head of Sedgwick's division had entirely disconcerted Johnston's plan of crushing the resistance of the Federal forces near Seven Pines by bringing Whiting's division down upon their right flank, which might well have turned the defeat of the Federals under Keyes and Heintzelman into a rout. The appearance of Sumner with his fresh troops just as the flanking movement began was dramatic indeed. The Confederates attacked their new foes with the impatient determination and reckless audacity which the emergency demanded, but they were met with the steadiness of admirably disciplined troops, and their headlong valor availed

brigades seems to have followed Wilcox's division on the afternoon of the 31st.

¹ 12 W. R., 935, 941.

them nothing. In fact, the moment their adversaries saw them in the confusion which always waits upon an unsuccessful assault, they instantly took the offensive in their turn, and by a bold charge drove the defeated Confederates from the contested field to their first positions.

The fighting at this battle showed that the troops on both sides had become soldiers. The advance of the Confederates under Hill was gallant and persistent; the resistance of Keyes, Casey, and Couch was obstinate, and there were some attempts on their part to recapture the positions from which they had been driven.¹ These attempts, it is true, were unsuccessful, but the fact that they should have been made at all shows with what resolute determination the contest was waged. Keyes says in his Report that "of the nine generals of the 4th corps who were present on the field, all, with one exception, were wounded, or his horse was hit, in the battle."² The losses on both sides were large for the numbers engaged,—that of the Federals slightly exceeding 5000,³ of whom about 650 were missing, while Longstreet lost 4851,⁴ and Whiting 1283,⁵ making a total of 6134. The Confederate loss was the heavier, as they were the attacking party.

It has been claimed by General Johnston⁶ and his friends that if he had not been wounded, the Confederate success of the 31st of May would probably have been completed on the 1st of June. But there

¹ 12 W. R., 934, 954, 958, 980.

² *Ib.*, 878.

³ *Ib.*, 762.

⁴ *Ib.*, 942.

⁵ 13 W. R., 506.

⁶ Johnston's *Narrative*, 141.

is no sufficient reason for this opinion. The great opportunity for a decisive success had been lost on the morning of May 31st. The situation of the Confederate army on June 1st hardly admitted of a sufficient concentration being effected to strike a very important blow. With the Federal corps of Porter and Franklin on the upper Chickahominy, where the river is smaller and more easily passable, it is hardly probable that any Confederate general would have ventured to concentrate a very large force near Fair Oaks and beyond Seven Pines. And although the lower trestle-bridges could not be used, the railroad bridge was still standing.¹ The Federals had also thrown over the river near the site of New Bridge, a pontoon-bridge, which was in working order on the morning of June 1st,² and troops could have been sent over it to strengthen Sumner, or to occupy the attention of the enemy, and thus prevent a concentration against Sumner.³ We have seen that the position assumed by Richardson prevented Longstreet from advancing farther towards Bottom's Bridge, and made it necessary for that officer, if he would resume the offensive at all, to begin by driving Richardson from his position. And any movement of this kind would expose the right of Longstreet's line to being attacked by the remnant of Keyes's corps and by a part of Heintzelman's also. It may be, perhaps, that Johnston would have reinforced Whiting with Magruder's six brigades, or some of them, and would then have attacked Sedg-

¹ 12 W. R., 114.

² *Ib.*, 112.

³ Allan, 51 55; 12 W. R., 113.

wick and Couch, and he does in his *Narrative* indicate that he would have done so¹; but, in the first place, these brigades were scattered along the upper Chickahominy guarding the crossings²; and if he had removed them from their positions, and brought them to Fair Oaks, any attack they might have made on Sedgwick and Couch would probably have been checked at once by the advent of troops from Franklin and Porter by way of New Bridge or the upper bridges. It is probable that Johnston thought that more might have been accomplished in the way of following up on June 1st the defeat of the 4th and 3d Federal corps begun on the day before; but we have seen that with Richardson's powerful division assisted by the fresh brigade of Birney on the line of the railroad, the remains of these corps could feel perfectly secure against further attack. In fine, there is not the slightest reason to suppose that Johnston would have accomplished more than G. W. Smith did, unless, indeed, Longstreet would have exerted himself more for the former than he did for the latter general.³

On the other hand, an opinion has always been largely entertained in the North that the Confederates were, at the close of the two days' fight, more or less demoralized, what with their severe losses in killed and wounded and the change of leaders, and that McClellan would have won an easy victory had he vigorously attacked them.⁴ But there is nothing to

¹ Johnston's *Narrative*, 141.

² Smith, 156.

³ See G. W. Smith's review of the evidence in Smith, 153-158.

⁴ Webb, 116, 117, 186; 2 Comte de Paris, 71.

indicate any such condition of demoralization, and there was no cause why such a condition should have existed. The Confederates, although decidedly successful on their right, had been, it is true, rudely checked on their left; but, in the battle considered as a whole, they not only had not been beaten, but they had driven their antagonists from their intrenchments in one part of the field, and they had guns, small arms, and colors to show as the trophies of their victory. It may well be admitted that had there been no uncertain and dangerous Chickahominy to complicate the question, McClellan had a fine opportunity offered him of bringing on a great battle, in which the chances, considering his superiority in numbers, would have been decidedly in his favor. But there was the Chickahominy to be considered, and the very inadequate means of crossing it which then existed, and the absolute necessity of maintaining an unbroken communication with the base of supplies. McClellan may perhaps have been too careful, but there is much to be said against any movement which puts in peril the hold of a large army upon its base of supplies.

The net result of the battle, in spite of the captured trophies, was undoubtedly favorable to the Federal arms. The retirement of the Confederates to their original positions was naturally interpreted by the Federal troops as an acknowledgment either of defeat, or inability to make a sustained and successful resistance in the open field to the advance of the United States forces. The *moral* of the Federal army had been on the whole heightened. Sumner's

2d corps was naturally elated. The reputation of the 4th corps, which had unjustly suffered from the first reports of the action, was afterwards in great part re-established. The troops of the 3d corps,—the division of Kearny,—had acquitted themselves with great credit. It remained for General McClellan to utilize the force at his disposal, to lead this large army of brave men, all of whom were devoted to him, to the achievement of the success which it would seem was really at this period of the campaign within his grasp.

The new commander of the Confederate army, General Robert E. Lee, was a man of marked distinction. His father, General Henry Lee, was a famous officer in the Revolutionary War, familiarly known as "Light Horse Harry." Robert E. Lee had been graduated at the Military Academy of West Point in the class of 1829, had entered the engineer corps, had served as chief engineer of the army in General Scott's campaign from Vera Cruz to the City of Mexico, and had won by his services in that post the unqualified commendation of his chief and the hearty admiration of the army. To his fertile brain and daring courage Scott declared that he was indebted for the plans and expedients by which the natural difficulties of the route were surmounted, and the troops led from victory to victory. At the time of his appointment to the command of the Army of Northern Virginia, General Lee was fifty-five years of age, in perfect health, vigorous, robust, and of a commanding presence. His character, public and private, was of the highest. In

intellect, it may be doubted whether he was superior to the able soldier whom he succeeded; indeed Joseph E. Johnston possessed as good a military mind as any general on either side; but in that fortunate combination of qualities,—physical, mental, and moral,—which go to make up a great commander, General Lee was unquestionably more favored than any of the leaders in the Civil War. He possessed at once the entire confidence of his Government and the unquestioning and enthusiastic devotion of the army. He had no rival, either in the councils of the Richmond War Department, or in the colloquies around the camp-fires. Lee's position was unique; no army-commander on either side was so universally believed in,—so absolutely trusted. Nor was there ever a commander who better deserved the support of his government, and the affection and confidence of his soldiers.

In spite of the example which had been so recently afforded him of the treacherous character of the Chickahominy River, General McClellan made no immediate preparations for transferring his army to the James. He employed his troops in building bridges to connect the wings of his army. These bridges had to be long enough to cross not only the Chickahominy itself, but the bogs and marshes through which it flowed, and their construction was a task of no ordinary labor and difficulty. It was, moreover, aggravated by the bad weather which prevailed during the first half of June. It consumed nearly three weeks¹; and during these weeks the

¹ 12 W. R., 115.

army made no forward movement of any consequence. McClellan indeed changed the positions of his corps; the 2d corps was permanently established on the south side of the river; the 6th was brought over and took post on the right of the 2d; only the 5th remained on the north side. The troops on the south side were moved forward a certain distance, and Porter's advance lines occupied Mechanicsville on the north of the Chickahominy. Elaborate field-works were constructed, which completely covered the positions of the army on the south side of the river, from Golding's farm to White Oak Swamp. This part of the position of the Federal army was thus rendered practically unassailable.¹ On the north side, works were thrown up behind Beaver Dam Creek, and the approaches from the south side were "strongly defended by intrenchments."²

In response to McClellan's urgent appeals for reinforcements, McCall's division, 9500 strong, was sent to him in the first half of June. It was added to Porter's corps and was stationed near Mechanicsville, behind Beaver Dam Creek. He also received some 11,000 men from Baltimore and Fort Monroe. On the 20th of June the army reached an aggregate of 105,445 men.³ There was no immediate prospect of a further increase in numbers.

At this time the bridges across the Chickahominy had been completed.⁴ The weather was fine.⁵ It was

¹ 13 W. R., 490; *cf. ib.*, 20.

² *Ib.*, 490.

³ 14 W. R., 238; 2 B. & L., 315. General Webb estimates the effective force at 92,500 men. Webb, 120.

⁴ Barnard's Report; 12 W. R., 115.

⁵ 1 M. H. S. M., 208.

obviously McClellan's opportunity to strike. The Confederates, as he must have known, were receiving reinforcements day by day. Jackson and his victorious troops had not yet returned from the Valley, but it was certainly to be expected that their arrival would not long be delayed, now that the Federal forces in that region were not threatening an advance. It was plain that the movement on Richmond ought to be made at once, before the army of General Lee should be strengthened by the arrival of Jackson's command. Whatever chances there were of such a movement succeeding, existed obviously in greater strength now than after Jackson should have joined the Army of Northern Virginia. It is true that a battle, in the ordinary sense of the word, was hardly to be looked for. The Confederate works around Richmond—for it was not to be supposed that the Confederates had been idle—must be assaulted or turned. As a matter of fact, as we know now, these works were not very strong¹; but strong or weak, they must be taken in some way, if success was to crown the operations of the campaign. Whether the Federal commander proposed to proceed by regular approaches,² or by bombarding the city,³ or in any other way, the sooner General McClellan began, the better chance he had of success.

Nor was this all. The situation of McClellan's army athwart the Chickahominy was necessarily an unsafe one. The difficulty with it was this,—that

¹ D. H. Hill ; 2 B. & L., 362.

² Lee's Report ; 13 W. R., 490 ; Lee to Jackson, 14 W. R., 589, 590.

³ Lee to Jackson, 14 W. R., 602 ; cf. 2 B. & L., 366.

the line of communication with the base of supplies was not directly covered by the position of the army, inasmuch as the York River railroad ran in a northeasterly direction some twelve miles from the Chickahominy to White House. Hence, a movement in force by the Confederates on the north bank of the Chickahominy would at once put the communications of the Federal army in imminent peril. The great bulk of McClellan's forces were necessarily on the south side of the river. He could gain nothing by pushing forward his right wing on the north bank; and yet the more troops he threw across to the south bank, the more difficult he made it for himself to protect his line of supplies. He was, in truth, in a precarious situation, and he knew it.¹ And he could hardly have supposed that he would be allowed to remain long undisturbed in that position.

McClellan, in fact, had already received a warning—an unmistakable hint of his adversary's intention. Lee had not been in command a fortnight when he determined to ascertain the character and strength of the Federal line of communications. He entrusted this task to his chief cavalry officer, the famous General J. E. B. Stuart, whose talents were at this time coming to the notice of the authorities. Stuart, with a force of 1200 men and two guns, rode out to the north of Richmond on the 11th of June; encountered and defeated a small Federal force near Old Church; then, heading for the York River railroad, reached Tunstall's Station without opposition,

¹ 12 W. R., 53.
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after having seen for himself the nature of the region lying north of the Chickahominy, and the insufficiency of the arrangements of the Federal general for the protection of his line of supplies. This was the object of the expedition ; and when Stuart reached the railroad, it had been accomplished. He had now, however, to get back again to camp ; and, recognizing that it would be well-nigh impossible, or at least extremely perilous, to return by the way by which he had come, he determined to make the circuit of McClellan's army, a feat which, in spite of great obstacles and dangers, he successfully accomplished.

A few days after this,¹ McClellan took the wise precaution of sending a number of transports, laden with ammunition, subsistence, and supplies of all sorts, from White House and Yorktown to the neighborhood of Harrison's Landing on the James River, to provide for the temporary necessities of the army in the contingency of his being forced to give up his present base of supplies and establish a new one on the river. That he contemplated making this change of position in case of necessity is well known,² and he had caused reconnoissances to be made by the topographical engineers of the region between the railroad and White Oak Swamp. General Averell, also, had had examinations made by cavalry officers in his command of the roads leading to the James River.³ From the data furnished by these officers maps were prepared for use in case the movement to the James should be decided on. In addition to

¹ 13 W. R., 19 ; McClellan's O. S., 411 ; 12 W. R., 159, 169.

² Webb, 128.

³ 2 B. & L., 431.

these, there was the map of Henrico County, Virginia,¹ on which considerable reliance could be placed. In spite of all these facilities, however, the roads were not all designated on any of the maps.² The task of mapping out the region between the Chickahominy and the James had not been thoroughly and systematically performed.³ Nor was this all. The country was a very difficult one for the movements of a large army and its trains. The roads, such as they were, were often very boggy, sometimes almost impassable. It is true there was often a choice of roads ; but when a bridge had to be crossed, there was usually but one approach to it. The army lay—for the most part—between the Chickahominy and White Oak Swamp. The bridge over White Oak Swamp had been destroyed. If the army was to move to the James River, this bridge must be rebuilt, and the approaches to it rendered practicable for the passage of the immense trains of supplies and the innumerable guns and wagons of the artillery. Similar preparations were needed at other points on the route to the James. None of these things had been done. Very possibly the doing of them would have warned Lee of the intention of McClellan, which he seems to have early formed, if he should be forced to retire from his position on the Chickahominy, to fall back

¹ 12 W. R., 153.

² *Id.*, 64, 119 ; 13 W. R., 193, 228 ; 2 B. & L., 379, 407, 408.

³ Letter to the writer from General H. L. Abbot, February 17, 1895 : "These reconnoissances would have been carried to the James River, had it not been known that this would have given Lee an inkling of the intention to move in that direction." *Cf.* Humphrey's Report, 12 W. R., 153.

to the James, near Malvern Hill, and not to retreat to Fortress Monroe. But the omission to attend to these matters was certain to cause delay and embarrassment in case the movement to the James should be undertaken in face of an active and aggressive enemy.

General Lee, it may well be imagined, had not been idle during this month of June. He had been more successful than his predecessor in obtaining reinforcements from other parts of the Confederacy. Somewhere about 15,000 men had been brought up from North Carolina under General Holmes,¹ and at least 5000 more under General Ripley had arrived from South Carolina.² Six regiments from Georgia³ under General Lawton were sent to join Jackson in the Valley. These and other troops added some 25,000 men at least to the Confederate force in Virginia, raising it to about 90,000 men.

The Confederate general now determined to take the offensive. The co-operation of Jackson's command being evidently essential to the success of such a movement, the first thing to be done was to reinforce it, so that that active officer might be able to dispose definitely of the Federal troops which had forced him to retreat from Winchester to Port Republic. For this purpose, not only was Lawton's Georgia brigade sent to him, as above stated, but two brigades of Smith's division were also transferred

¹ 2 B. & L., 217. In an abstract of the force of the Army of Northern Virginia (14 W. R., 645), on July 20th, the strength of the North Carolina troops is given at 15,801. Cf. Johnston's *Narrative*, 142.

² 2 B. & L., 217.

³ 14 W. R., 589; 2 B. & L., 218.

from the vicinity of Richmond to the Shenandoah Valley.¹ This was about the 11th of June. Soon afterwards, however, it appearing certain that the Federal troops in the Valley had retired and given up further operations for the time being, Jackson was ordered on the 16th to make arrangements for uniting his force with the main army as soon as he could.² The original plan was, that he, leaving a small force to watch the country and guard the passes, should move south to Ashland on the Richmond and Fredericksburg railroad, and from thence, with the assistance, perhaps, of a part of Stuart's cavalry, sweep down on the north side of the Chickahominy upon the communications of the Federal army, while Lee's army should attack it in front.³

On June 17th, Jackson, with his accustomed promptness, put his troops in march towards Richmond, leaving his cavalry and one battery near Harrisonburg. His command consisted of three divisions, containing ten brigades, with eight batteries,—perhaps 25,000 men in all. Preceding his command, and riding on horseback the last fifty miles for fear of being recognized as a passenger on the train,—such was the excessive caution which was habitual to him,—he attended a council of war in Richmond on the afternoon of the 23d, at which were present, besides himself and General Lee, Generals Longstreet, D. H. Hill, and A. P. Hill.⁴ Here he was informed

¹ 14 W. R., 589.

² *Ib.*, 602.

³ *Ib.*, 589.

⁴ See account of this council by D. H. Hill in 2 B. & L., 347.

that another plan had been decided on.¹ The four commands of Longstreet, Jackson, and the Hills, accompanied by Stuart's cavalry, were to operate on McClellan's communications on the north side of the Chickahominy, while the divisions of Magruder and Huger were to hold the lines in front of Richmond on the south side of the Chickahominy.² Holmes's division was to guard the southern approaches to Richmond, and to take such part in the subsequent movements as occasion might offer. This was the general scheme.³

Coming now more to the details, it was expected that Jackson, whose troops were coming down from the north, would outflank any and all lines of defence which the Union troops on the north side of the river had constructed, and which naturally faced west, so that all such lines would have to be abandoned without a contest, and the road would be open for the troops of Longstreet and the Hills to join those of Jackson,—unless, indeed, the Federal commander should decide to throw up intrenchments facing north, and make a resolute stand on the north side of the river. It was almost certain that the communications of the Federal army with White House would be severed; nothing but a withdrawal of the entire Union army to the north side of the river—and this, in view of McClellan's apparent un-

¹ Longstreet, 120. "The suggestion was offered that the enemy had probably destroyed the bridges and ferries on the Pamunkey along the line of his rear, which might leave Jackson in perilous condition if the front attack should be delayed." We confess ourselves unable to see the force of this "suggestion."

² 13 W. R., 490, 498.

³ See Map VI., facing page 212.

willingness to risk a great battle, was hardly to be looked for—could avail to maintain them against the attack of such a powerful force. It was, however, equally evident that if McClellan—after the bulk of the Confederate army should have crossed to the north side of the river—should, either before or after a contest, withdraw all his troops to the south side of the river, break down the bridges, and assault the lines of Richmond with the greater part of his force, he would stand an excellent chance of success.¹ In such an event he would of course have to establish a new base on the James, but this could very possibly be managed with the aid of the fleet. But General Lee on this occasion, as several times afterwards during the war, correctly divined his adversary's probable course, so far at least as to assume that he would not use this opportunity, offered by the absence of the bulk of the Confederate army from the lines of Richmond, for making an attack on the city. Then there was this further question. It was clear that McClellan would have to abandon his present position; but in regard to his subsequent movements,—whether he would retreat down the Peninsula, or try to establish a new base on the James River at some convenient spot, such as Harrison's Landing,—General Lee was entirely at fault.² Had Lee not been convinced that McClellan would fail to seize this opportunity for assaulting Richmond, he would not have dared to carry the bulk of his army to the north bank of the Chickahominy; but he would

¹ 13 W. R., 662; D. H. Hill, in 2 B. & L., 362.

² But see D. H. Hill, in 2 B. & L., 385, 386.

never have dreamed of doing this at all if he had thought it probable that McClellan, when his communications with White House were severed, would retreat to Harrison's Landing; he would have left it to Jackson alone, or assisted by a small force of cavalry, to operate on the communications of the Federal army, while the main body of the Confederate army and the greater portion of Stuart's cavalry under Lee's personal direction would attack the Federal position in front, or move by way of the Charles City and parallel roads upon Malvern Hill. This was the plan which, as we have seen, he had apparently at first decided on; and it would certainly seem more likely that the Federal general would seek to establish for his army a new base on the James River, which was entirely at his disposal, being controlled by the Federal fleet, and which offered the enormous advantage for subsequent operations of a choice between its north and south banks, than that he would retreat to Fortress Monroe, and adjourn indefinitely the further progress of the campaign against Richmond. But Lee considered it so probable that McClellan would choose this latter course, that he took the mass of his army with him on the north side of the Chickahominy, so that he could fall in great force upon the Federal army when it should cross Bottom's Bridge and the railway bridge on its retreat down the Peninsula.¹ Hence, when it was afterwards found that McClellan was not going to fall back across the Chickahominy, but was going to the James, to the neighborhood of Mal-

¹ See Lee's Report; 13 W. R., 493, 494; Lee's *Lee*, 162.

vern Hill and Harrison's Landing, the Confederate troops, some of whom (as we shall soon see) had followed the river as far down as Bottom's Bridge, had to retrace their steps and cross at New Bridge and Sumner's Upper (or Grapevine) Bridge, in order to attack the rear-guard of the Federal army. The interruption of the Confederate movement, thus caused, was of the utmost benefit to the commander of the Army of the Potomac, as it gave him at least twenty-four hours to get the troops and trains started for the James,¹ while the Confederate army became so dislocated that General Lee was unable afterwards to concentrate it for a decisive blow until his adversary had established himself on the well-nigh impregnable position of Malvern Hill.² But we are anticipating.

Some rumors of the formidable combinations of the Confederate leaders reached the ears of the Union commander. On June 23d, General Porter was directed to send out a force to watch his right flank towards Walnut Grove and Bethesda Church, and was informed that, in case he should be attacked in large force, the commanding general counted upon him to hold his own on the north side of the Chickahominy against superior numbers, long enough to enable "the decisive movement" to be made which would "determine the fate of Richmond."³ The same day General Casey was sent to White House, to take command of the depot of supplies there, and to protect "the railway and telegraphic communications between that point and the Army of the Potomac."⁴

¹ Webb, 137.² Allan, 136.³ 14 W. R., 247.⁴ *Ib.*, 248.

These orders indicate that General McClellan thought it not unlikely that the enemy might attack Porter and threaten the communications; that he himself was on the point of attacking the lines in his own immediate front with the expectation of compelling the evacuation of Richmond; and that he then expected to maintain communication with his present base of supplies during this final movement.¹ The next day, the 24th, he got word from a deserter that Jackson was marching from Gordonsville to Frederick's Hall, and was intending to attack his rear on the 28th.² Mr. Stanton, on being inquired of, replied by telegram on the 25th that his information also led him to "suspect that Jackson's real movement now is toward Richmond."³

McClellan, nevertheless, proceeded to carry out his offensive movement. His bridges and intrenchments were now completed. He ordered Heintzelman to advance his picket line on the Williamsburg road. This was successfully done on the 25th⁴; and, at five o'clock in the afternoon, McClellan telegraphed to Washington from the field to announce the success of the movement,⁵ not because it was so important a thing in itself, but because it opened the way for a more decisive step which was to be taken the next day.

On returning to his headquarters, however, he received further information of Jackson's movements,

¹ At the same time, large quantities of forage and subsistence were loaded at White House on transports, to be sent, if needed, to the James. 12 W. R., 159, 160.

² 12 W. R., 49.

³ *Ib.*, 49.

⁴ *Ib.*, 49, 50; 13 W. R., 95.

⁵ 12 W. R., 50.

which convinced him that the enemy were intending to take the offensive in great force and with the utmost promptitude. At once he sent to Mr. Stanton one of his characteristic communications. He telegraphed the Secretary¹ that he thought that Jackson was going to attack his right and rear; that the enemy's force was stated at 200,000 men; that he regretted his inferiority in numbers, but felt himself in no way to blame for it; and that if a disaster should result, "the responsibility for it could not be thrown on his shoulders, but must rest where it belonged," *i. e.*, on the President and Secretary. To this unmilitary and offensive communication the Secretary replied,² not noticing the implied censure on himself, but sending McClellan his best wishes for success. Mr. Lincoln, however, could not refrain from protesting in a serious and dignified note against the insinuation that he had not done his best to support the army.³ And it is not out of place here to state that, whatever errors of judgment and consequent mistakes the President and Mr. Stanton may have fallen into, their patriotism, and their sincere desire for the success of General McClellan and his army, cannot seriously be questioned.

To return now to the Confederates. Jackson, when asked at the council on the 23d when his troops would be ready to co-operate, replied that they would be ready at daylight of the 26th, and he adhered to this assurance even after Longstreet had expressed the opinion that this date was too early a one.⁴ Jackson, in fact, was mistaken; his march

¹ 12 W. R., 51.

² 14 W. R., 258, 259.

³ *Id.* 259.

⁴ 2 B. & L., 347.

was delayed by the fallen trees with which the Federal troops had obstructed the roads, and by the great fatigue of his men; and when, after waiting till the afternoon of the 26th, the van of Lee's army crossed to the northern side of the Chickahominy and approached Mechanicsville, the Union troops had not yet had their right flank turned by Jackson's advance from the north. The Confederates, under the lead of A. P. Hill, a daring and energetic but inconsiderate officer, pushed the Federals hard, and their outposts retired to their intrenched line behind Beaver Dam Creek, a little to the east of Mechanicsville, where they felt secure against any direct attack. In spite of the fact that nothing had been heard of Jackson, and notwithstanding the evident strength of the Federal position, Hill attacked fiercely and recklessly. He was repulsed with great slaughter, mainly by McCall's division of Porter's corps, without having made the smallest impression on the Federal lines. The action was not over till quite late in the evening.¹

General McClellan spent a part of this evening of the 26th in conferring with Generals Franklin and Smith at the former's headquarters near the Chickahominy, on the south side, and, later in the evening, he consulted with General Porter at his headquarters near Gaines's Mill, on the north side. It was now known that a large part of Lee's army had crossed to the north side of the Chickahominy with the expectation of uniting, the next day, with Jackson's

¹ See D. H. Hill, in 2 B. & L., 352; F. J. Porter, *ib.*, 328-331; 13 W.R., 623.

command, which had come down from the Shenandoah Valley, when the whole force would move upon the communications of the Federal army with White House. If this plan should be persisted in, it would almost certainly be successful, unless the greater part of the Federal army should also cross to the north side of the Chickahominy, and fight a great battle. This could certainly be done, and there was assuredly a fair chance of a successful result.¹ But thus to bring the issue of the campaign to the test of a great battle was not in accordance with General McClellan's disposition. Then there was this consideration: now that four fifths of Lee's army were on the north side of the Chickahominy, would it not be possible, and, if possible, would it not be the best thing which McClellan could do, to advance boldly on Richmond? Porter, who would probably find it impracticable to cross the next morning to the south side of the river in the presence of such a superior force, would indeed have to remain at least for a day on the north side of it, unless he should find it feasible to elude the enemy and join the main body. If he remained on the north side, he would very probably have to sustain the shock of the larger part of the Confederate army, and it was certainly not unlikely that he would be overwhelmed. But in the meantime McClellan might carry the lines of Richmond. If he succeeded in taking Richmond, he would of course have to make some arrangement with the fleet for the speedy establishment of a new base on the

¹ See 12 W.R., 59, where McClellan discusses the objections to this course.

James; but after so great a success, surely this might be counted upon. For a few days, at any rate, there would be no deficiency of supplies, for the stock on hand happened to be unusually large, and the Confederate stores in Richmond would of course be available. The three generals advised this course.

McClellan had just received a report from the chief of his Secret Service corps,¹ which gave the numbers of Lee's army at 180,000 men, and stated that there were 205 guns in the works around Richmond. This report may have had some influence in inducing him to decide against the advice of his favorite generals. But apart from this, McClellan could not but see that if he should be unsuccessful in carrying the lines of Richmond, and should also fail from any reason to establish within a reasonable time a new base on the James River, he assuredly would find himself in a dangerous situation. The Confederates, by recrossing the Chickahominy at Long Bridge while the Federal army was in front of or in Richmond, would be able to reach Malvern Hill and adjacent points long before he could possibly do so. And it might not be practicable to select a convenient spot higher up the James River, which would answer all needed requirements. Taking all into account, McClellan decided to refrain from attacking Richmond; and he determined that when he should be forced to abandon his base at White House, he would fall back to the James and establish a new base there, from which to recommence offensive operations when occasion might offer.²

¹ 12 W. R., 269.

² *Ib.*, 60. Cf. Webb, 187, 188; 2 Comte de Paris, 105, 106.

It was too late, after this decision had been arrived at, for Porter to effect a withdrawal of his troops and guns to the south side of the Chickahominy, in presence of his aggressive and powerful foes.¹ But, as active operations by the other Federal corps were not to be undertaken the next day, Porter certainly had a right to expect that enough troops could be spared from the intrenchments south of the Chickahominy to reinforce him to such a degree that he could maintain himself till nightfall, in his carefully prepared position of Gaines's Mill, against any attack which Lee's army could make. But this obvious duty of reinforcing Porter, McClellan did not perform. He sent to Porter before the battle two batteries only.² Instead of exerting himself to ensure success in the conflict which was now so likely to be forced on Porter, McClellan (as we shall soon see) was induced to believe that his lines south of the Chickahominy were seriously threatened,³ and accordingly refrained from sending Porter the troops which would have enabled him to hold his ground and repulse the Confederates.

At daybreak of June 27th, news having reached General McClellan that Jackson had joined the other Confederate troops on the north side of the Chickahominy, Porter was ordered to withdraw McCall's division from Beaver Dam Creek to the selected position of Gaines's Mill,—a task which was successfully accomplished, although the troops were hard pressed by their pursuing foes. Porter's corps,

¹ 13 W. R., 21. See Franklin, 1 C. W. (1863), 624.

² 2 B. & L., 335; 13 W. R., 237.

³ 12 W. R., 57.

—the 5th,—was thus concentrated. It consisted of three divisions of infantry, six regiments of cavalry, and 20 batteries of artillery,—in all about 30,000 men.¹ It was a formidable force; the men were well disciplined; they were, to a reasonable extent, inured to war; and they were well commanded. Porter himself was an officer of the old army, a graduate of West Point, who had seen service in Mexico under Scott, and he was known throughout the army as a clear-headed, brave, and skilful general.

The Army of Northern Virginia was now fairly embarked in an aggressive campaign. It had, so thought the officers and men composing it, stood on the defensive long enough. The enemy, who had for weeks been encamped within sight of the steeples of Richmond, were now to be attacked,—to be forced to retreat from the neighborhood of the capital,—to be routed,—perhaps to be captured. A stern and resolute spirit pervaded Lee's army. The men had a clear and definite object before them, and they meant to attain it at whatever cost. Their ranks were full, and they had every confidence in their leaders; they knew that McClellan could not possibly maintain himself where he was, and they thought that there was every probability of defeating him when he should be obliged to retreat. Hence the bloody repulse suffered by A. P. Hill at Beaver Dam Creek on the 26th had no discouraging effect either on his troops² or on the army generally;

¹ 2 B. & L., 314, 337, n.

² But see D. H. Hill, in 2 B. & L., 361.

and when, early the next morning, McCall retired to Gaines's Mill, the spirits of the Confederate soldiers rose to a high point of confidence and elation.

About noon, the pursuing Confederates discovered Porter's position, a short distance east of Powhite Creek, a small stream which empties into the Chickahominy. On this stream Gaines's Mill is situated, from which the battle got its name. Porter's lines, which were naturally strong, and had been made more formidable by digging rifle-pits, and by felling trees in front of them, were in the shape of a semicircle, having its extremities resting on the Chickahominy. Everything had been carefully arranged and provided for, so far as was possible, considering the number of troops at Porter's disposal. His batteries were judiciously placed, and his troops skilfully disposed. With adequate reserves, to take the place of exhausted or depleted regiments, the position was one that might certainly have been held, at least during an afternoon, by such well-disciplined troops as Porter had, commanded by an officer of his ability.

The battle began about two o'clock with a furious assault by A. P. Hill, who was finally repulsed with great loss. The Confederates were almost invariably¹ the assailants; nothing could exceed their gallantry and determination; but for hours their efforts were absolutely fruitless. It seemed for a long while that the Federal positions could not be carried. General Lee, in fact, was so impressed with the successful resistance made by Porter that he im-

¹ But not always; 13 W. R., 432, 837.

agined that "the principal part of the Federal army was on the north side of the Chickahominy." He speaks in his report of "the superior force of the enemy," and says that at one time "it became apparent that the enemy was gradually gaining ground."¹ Porter's troops, however, though admirably handled, were not numerous enough to oppose a sufficient resistance at all points of their line. Jackson and D. H. Hill were attacking them on their north front, A. P. Hill and Longstreet on their west front. When Slocum's division, which McClellan sent from Franklin's corps after the fight began, reached the field at 4 P.M.,² Porter had exhausted his reserves. Slocum's brigades were immediately sent to the weak places in the line, and the Federal resistance was protracted for some two hours. Towards evening, however, General Lee, on the arrival of fresh troops,³ ordered a general advance. The Federal lines were broken near their centre, the Confederates poured in, turning the right of the troops which constituted Porter's left, and also making it imperative for those on the right of his line to abandon their positions. There was more or less confusion, 22 guns were either captured or left on the field,⁴ and some 2800 prisoners,⁵ of whom about 1200 were wounded men,⁶ were taken by the victorious Confederates. But the greater part of the troops

¹ 13 W. R., 492.

² 2 B. & L., 339.

³ 13 W. R., 493.

⁴ 2 B. & L., 340.

⁵ 13 W. R., 41.

⁶ This is on the supposition that the proportion of killed to wounded was the same in the Federal as in the Confederate army. Cf. 13 W. R., 506.

fell back in good order, and made repeated stands.¹ The appearance on the field of two brigades from Sumner's corps assisted greatly to check the pursuit of the Confederates. During the night and early morning, all the Federal troops were quietly withdrawn to the south bank of the Chickahominy, and the bridges over the stream in that vicinity were destroyed. The Federal loss in killed, wounded, and missing is given as 6837²; that of the Confederates in killed and wounded must have been at least 6000.³

No one can read the accounts of this action without coming to the conclusion that 10,000 or 15,000 more men sent to Porter would have enabled him to hold his own till nightfall, and then to have effected the withdrawal of his command with entire safety. And it is quite possible that if McClellan had sent the brigades of French and Meagher from Sumner's corps an hour or two earlier, the battle would have been gained. But General McClellan adopted the plan of asking his corps-commanders if they could spare any of their troops to go to Porter's assistance; Franklin promptly sent one of his two divisions, that of Slocum; towards the close of the afternoon Sumner was willing to spare the two brigades of French and Meagher; but Heintzelman and Keyes thought it dangerous to weaken their lines.⁴ The demonstrations which Magruder and

¹ "Although swept from their defences, . . . the well-disciplined Federals continued in retreat to fight with stubborn resistance." Jackson's Report, 13 W. R., 556. Cf. Lee's Report, *ib.*, 493.

² *Id.*, 41.

³ 2 B. & L., 342, n.; cf. Allan, 94, n.

⁴ 12 W. R., 57-59.

Huger made in compliance with Lee's orders succeeded perfectly in their object; the corps-commanders (except Franklin, who, having sent Slocum's division, had no troops to spare) were deceived or in doubt as to the intentions of the enemy, and not unnaturally preferred to keep as many of their troops with them as they could. McClellan contented himself with adopting their views, and accordingly Porter was beaten. There was also another course open to McClellan. An attack on Magruder's lines might very possibly have had the effect of arresting the attack on Porter.¹ Magruder himself believed that his lines might have been carried.² At any rate the situation of Porter was so serious, and the importance of preventing his defeat was so material to the success of McClellan's operations, that it is surprising that McClellan did not adopt one or the other of these expedients. It is true that the result of the battle of Gaines's Mill, although a defeat, was not a serious disaster to the Army of the Potomac; but this was not due to any nice calculations on the part of General McClellan as to the number of troops which Porter required. He knew that to make Porter reasonably secure, more troops were needed; he did not send them, because he was deceived by one of the ordinary artifices of war.

On the evening of the 27th, after the battle, McClellan informed his corps-commanders³ of his intention to fall back to Harrison's Landing on the James River, and issued his orders accordingly. It is not easy

¹ Cf. 1 M. H. S. 'M., 212, 213; Allan, 96.

² 13 W. R., 662.

³ 12 W. R., 60; 1 C. W. (1863), 355.

to see why he should not have come to this decision, and announced it, at midnight of the 26th, for he must have known then that his communications with White House would be irrecoverably lost unless he should take the most energetic measures to preserve them, and he had then made up his mind to stand strictly on the defensive. Much might have been done during the 27th to prepare the roads and bridges for the movement of the army across White Oak Swamp, and thence to the James. But although McClellan early made preparations to abandon his depot at White House, and issued orders on the 26th to have all stores that were not needed for immediate use put on board ship,¹ and had the herd of 2500 beef-cattle brought down from White House to Savage Station on the morning of the 27th,² it was not until the evening of the 27th that he decided to put his trains in motion for the James,³ and that final orders were given to Colonel Ingalls, the officer in charge of the stores at White House, to break up the depot there, and remove the property by water to the James River.⁴ It certainly would seem that much precious time was lost by this delay.

McClellan had, however, recognized the importance of destroying the bridges across the Chickahominy. The upper bridges were destroyed on the 26th and 27th,⁵ and orders were issued on the 27th

¹ 12 W. R., 169. The depot of supplies at Despatch Station, east of the Chickahominy, was also broken up on the 26th, and the stores removed to Savage Station. *Id.*, 169.

² *Id.*, 169, 170.

³ *Id.*, 160.

⁴ *Id.*, 160.

⁵ *Id.*, 118.

to destroy the railroad bridge and Bottom's Bridge, in case of an attack.¹ They were both burnt on the morning of the 28th.²

Thus ended the first act in the drama of the "Seven Days' Battles." It left General Lee in undisputed possession of the north bank of the Chickahominy. The only Federal force of any consequence on that side of the river had been beaten and driven away. This success had been won, however, only after a bloody battle, in which the Confederates had suffered a loss (which they could ill afford) of some 6000 officers and men. We can hardly suppose that General Lee attacked at Gaines's Mill because he deemed the driving of Porter from his strong position an essential preliminary to the success of his plan of breaking up the communications of the Federal army with White House; for he must have known, as soon as he saw that Porter was (as it were) clinging with both hands to the Chickahominy, that General McClellan had decided to leave his communications to their fate. General Lee undoubtedly ordered the attack because he thought he saw an opportunity of dealing a very severe blow at his antagonist. No one can say that he was not justified in expecting a great success; and had he been able to concentrate his troops earlier in the day and to get them all on the ground at the same time, he might well have had a much greater success than he actually obtained. As it was, however, his expectations had not been satisfied. Porter had, indeed, been beaten; prisoners, guns, and colors attested the victory of the Con-

¹ 13 W. R., 216.

² *Ib.*, 192, 200.

federates; but no impression of any moment had been made upon the *moral* of the Federal army,—even upon that of the defeated troops of the 5th corps. The truth was, that both armies had acquired during the past year an admirable steadiness and cohesion; the men had become accustomed to military life, to obedience, to discipline; they had learned to trust their superiors; they were used to patient endurance of hardship, of disaster even; they had begun to admire the soldierly virtues; they were proud of the gallant officers who led them; they were not to be easily dismayed; even after defeat they were always ready to resume the offensive. Hence a partial success was not by any means always the forerunner of other successes; and partial successes were throughout the war far more common than complete successes.

To return now to General Lee. Finding on the morning of the 28th that all of Porter's troops had recrossed the Chickahominy and had broken down the bridges behind them, he pushed Ewell down the river as far as Bottom's Bridge. As we have pointed out above, he was expecting McClellan to cross the river at the lower bridges and attempt to retreat to Fort Monroe. But he waited in vain for any movement of this sort on the part of the Federal army. During the day of the 28th, the Confederates repaired some of the upper bridges across the Chickahominy, and made preparations to cross over to the south side.

General McClellan, as we have seen, issued his orders for the movement of his army to the James

River on the evening of the 27th. The army lay between the Chickahominy on the north and east, and White Oak Swamp on the south. On the west it was protected by strong works, so that, so long as an adequate force was retained in them, no irruption of the enemy from the direction of Richmond was to be feared. The first thing to do was to make arrangements for crossing White Oak Swamp, or rather for crossing White Oak Swamp Creek, through which the waters of the swamp, which itself was not passable for troops, empty into the Chickahominy. The old bridge over this creek had been destroyed by the Federal troops when they took up position north of the swamp, and it was now necessary to rebuild it, for it was only over this bridge, and across a ford known as Brackett's Ford, a mile and a quarter west of the bridge, that the army and trains could make their way to the James River. Orders were accordingly issued on the night of the 27th to the engineer officers to rebuild the bridge on the site of the old one, and to construct a new one at Brackett's Ford. The old bridge was finished on the morning of the 28th, and the new one at Brackett's Ford by the evening of the same day.¹

The next step was to send a sufficient number of troops across the creek to take up a defensive position to the south of it, where the Charles City and other roads from Richmond debouch, so as to protect the march of the rest of the army to the James River. Keyes, who commanded the 4th corps, was assigned to this duty. He received his orders at

¹ 12 W. R., 118, 119 ; 13 W. R., 192.

1 A.M. of the 28th, and before noon he had crossed the creek and taken up a position four miles south of the bridge, where he observed the Charles City, New Market, and Quaker roads,¹ and thus ensured a safe passage to Malvern Hill for the trains and the reserve artillery, as well as for the 5th corps, which had suffered so heavily in the action of the day before. Morell's division of this corps crossed the creek that afternoon and took up position a mile and a half to the north of Keyes's troops.² Sykes's division did not move till 6 P.M., and after a short halt crossed at Brackett's Ford early in the morning of the 29th.³ McCall's division followed that of Sykes, and soon after noon of the 29th was across the creek.⁴

The reserve artillery of the army under Colonel Hunt crossed the creek during the night of the 28th and went into camp the next morning near the junction of the New Market and Charles City roads.⁵

The great herd of 2500 beef-cattle crossed early in the morning of the 29th, and at daylight of the 30th was driven to the James River, reaching its destination without loss.⁶

The trains of the army, consisting of some 3600 wagons and 700 ambulances,⁷ were started as soon as possible after midnight of the 27th, and "on the

¹ 13 W. R., 192.

² *Ib.*, 274.

³ *Ib.*, 350.

⁴ *Ib.*, 389.

⁵ *Ib.*, 237.

⁶ 12 W. R., 170 ; " 29," on the 13th line from the foot of the page, should be " 28."

⁷ *Ib.*, 158.

afternoon of the 29th were all safely across White Oak Swamp."¹

During the whole of the 28th the two corps of Heintzelman and Sumner, with Smith's division of Franklin's corps, held the Union lines south of the Chickahominy, so that no intelligence could be gained of the Federal movements by the Confederate generals, Magruder and Huger. Nor could General Lee on the north side of the river discover what McClellan was doing. As he says himself: "The country was densely wooded and intersected by impassable swamps, at once concealing his [the enemy's] movements and precluding reconnoissances. . . . The bridges over the Chickahominy in rear of the enemy were destroyed, and their reconstruction was impracticable in the presence of his whole army and powerful batteries. We were therefore compelled to wait until his purpose should be developed."²

Meantime, however, Stuart on the morning of the 28th was sent with his cavalry to break up the York River Railroad,³ and he, accompanied by Ewell's division, reached Despatch Station, tore up the track, and made some captures. He then proceeded with his cavalry alone to White House, reaching its neighborhood by nightfall. All the next day, the 29th, Stuart spent at White House, provisioning his command, and completing the destruction of those sup-

¹ 12 W. R., 160.

² 13 W. R., 494.

³ Longstreet (130) says that General Lee sent Stuart and Ewell on this mission "under the impression that the enemy must reopen connection with his base on the Pamunkey."

plies which the Federal quartermaster-general had not been able to remove or destroy,¹—doubtless an agreeable, but, under the circumstances, a very unwise occupation of most precious time. Whether the Federals saved a larger or a smaller amount of their stores, and even whether the Confederates captured more or less of them, were matters of small consequence compared with the assistance which Stuart and his cavalry could render to the rest of the army in its attempt to turn the retreat of the Army of the Potomac into a rout. Hence Stuart should have been at hand, where he could be despatched at once in pursuit of the retiring Federals, as soon as the direction of their retreat had been ascertained. But General Lee, like the greater part of the generals in the Civil War, made little account of having his cavalry act in co-operation with the main army; it was not until the 30th that he ordered Stuart to recross the Chickahominy, and reunite his command to that of Jackson; and (to finish now with this subject) Stuart, though he moved with his accustomed celerity, was unable to bear any part in the attempts to break up the orderly retreat of the Union army, and, in fact, did not join Lee until after the battle of Malvern Hill had ended in the defeat of the Confederates.²

General Lee was not able to make up his mind that his antagonist was withdrawing to the James until the night of the 28th, when the signs of a general movement in the Federal camp had become apparent, and he issued no orders until the morning

¹ 13 W. R., 515-517.

² *Ib.*, 497.

of the 29th. He had with him on the north side of the Chickahominy the commands of Longstreet, Jackson, A. P. Hill, and D. H. Hill. South of the river, in the works in front of Richmond, was the division of Magruder, and, on his right, that of Huger. Lee was now satisfied that the Union army had either abandoned its works, or must be on the point of so doing, in order to take up its march to the James. He determined to press it simultaneously in flank and rear. Magruder was ordered to advance down the Williamsburg road, while Jackson and D. H. Hill were to cross the Chickahominy at Sumner's Upper (or Grapevine) Bridge, and march on Savage Station. Here, or in this vicinity, their united commands could attack the rear-guard of the Federal army, which (it might be expected) would be found covering the passage of troops and trains over White Oak Swamp. Then Longstreet, with whom was A. P. Hill, was ordered to ascend the north bank of the Chickahominy as far as New Bridge, which Magruder had opportunely repaired during the 28th, and march south by the Nine-Mile and other roads till he reached the Darbytown road, in the neighborhood of Charles City cross-roads, where he might expect to be joined by Huger, who was directed to march from the lines of Richmond down the Charles City road. These troops (it was expected) would strike the right flank of the Federal army as it was marching from White Oak Swamp to Malvern Hill, and it was hoped that by a vigorous attack this retreat could be converted into a rout. These orders were eminently appro-

priate to the situation, so far as they went; they should, as it seems to us, have provided for Stuart's cavalry to precede Longstreet's march; but still, even without the cavalry, and even although a whole day had been lost on the north bank of the Chickahominy, there was good reason to expect that, with good luck, and a display of proper energy on the part of the corps- and division-commanders, some successes, and perhaps of considerable moment, over the retiring Federal army might be obtained by the Confederates.

But General Lee's army was now so much scattered, and its parts were so separated from each other by natural obstacles, that he had need in this emergency of more than the ordinary amount of good fortune to enable him to reap a substantial harvest from the opportunities which were now presented to him. Certain results, and those of a character to encourage the Confederate soldiers and reassure the public mind in Richmond, were as a matter of course to be expected. The army of General McClellan was certain to march toward the James, and to be followed, or pursued, if that term be preferred, by the army of General Lee. General Lee, to be sure, knew very well that the Army of the Potomac was marching to the James, not because it was pursued by the Army of Northern Virginia, but because it was absolutely necessary for McClellan to secure a new base of operations as soon as possible. But for the public and the soldiers it was enough to know that the Confederate army was pursuing the Federal army. It was exceedingly likely that the Union commander would not choose to encumber his march

with all his sick and wounded ; hence a considerable number of prisoners would in all probability be taken. It was also very possible that the Federal commander would not be able to find transportation for the immense quantity of provisions and forage with which his government had so liberally supplied the needs of his army ; many of these stores, therefore, would fall into the hands of the Confederates. There would also be stragglers, and plenty of them too, to be picked up. Many muskets would be thrown away by tired and lazy soldiers ; some guns and many wagons would be sure to stick fast in the mud, where they could be added to the long list of captures. But while these trophies and acquisitions were practically certain to be gained, General Lee was perfectly well aware that the Federal army would lose nothing of the least consequence in losing these things. What he was aiming at was something far more important than anything of this kind. It was to effect the rout of the Federal army. For this he relied, first, on his dispositions, which, as we have just said, were, with the exception of his instructions, or lack of instructions, to his cavalry, excellent, and, secondly, on the demoralization which he expected to find produced in the Federal army by the enforced change of position from the Chickahominy to the James, made after the loss of a battle, and interrupted and interfered with by an active and resolute foe, always pursuing, and sometimes intercepting the march of the retreating trains and columns.

The first operation ordered was, it will be remem-

bered, the advance of Magruder's strong division from the lines of Richmond towards Savage Station, where the rear-guard of the Union army might fairly be expected to be, even as late as the 29th. Jackson's powerful corps was to cross the Chickahominy and co-operate in this movement. But Jackson found the bridge over which he must cross the Chickahominy so thoroughly destroyed that it took him all day to repair it, and Magruder was obliged to act alone. Fortune, however, favored him ; for the Federal defensive force, which should have consisted of the corps of Heintzelman on the Federal left, that of Sumner in the centre, and that of Franklin on the right, was most unexpectedly broken, partly by the withdrawal of Heintzelman's corps to cross White Oak Swamp, which exposed Sumner's left, and partly by the retirement of Slocum's division of Franklin's corps in the same direction. General McClellan was not on the ground, and the senior corps-commander, Sumner, who ought promptly to have assumed command in his absence, evidently did not do so. Heintzelman saw no need of his remaining near Savage Station ; he thought there were troops enough, and more than enough, there already ; so he went off. Slocum left, having asked and obtained permission from McClellan himself to take his division across the swamp in view of its losses at Gaines's Mill ; a request that should have been addressed to his corps-commander and not to the commanding general. The consequence of these defections was that for a time Sumner's left was in the air, and that there was

a serious gap between his right and the other division of Franklin's corps, that of W. F. Smith. But Magruder was not quick enough to take advantage of these weak points in his adversary's position; he acted with great circumspection; he even sent to Huger for reinforcements, thereby interfering with the movement of that officer down the Charles City road; finally, in the afternoon, he attacked, first at Allen's Farm, and then at Savage Station. The action was fought with some spirit, but the Confederates were repulsed without difficulty and the Federal rear-guard was free to resume its march. It has often been said, and it is certainly true, that had Jackson been there the action at Savage Station would have been a very different affair; it would not, however, necessarily have been a defeat for the Union troops, for it would have been perfectly possible to recall Heintzelman and Slocum had Sumner and Franklin been hard pressed.

During this day of the 29th, the ammunition, stores, and supplies of all kinds which had been collected at Savage Station, which could not be carried away, were set on fire and partially, at least, destroyed; and the engines and cars were run into the Chickahominy. There was a field-hospital near Savage Station in which were left those sick and wounded men who could not be safely carried with the army. They are said to have numbered 2500.

During the night the Federal troops retired by General McClellan's orders across White Oak Swamp. Richardson's division of Sumner's corps was the rear-guard of this portion of the army, and

he crossed the bridge and destroyed it about 10 A.M. of the 30th.

The Army of the Potomac was now with all its artillery and trains south of White Oak Swamp. The roads to Malvern Hill were unobstructed except by the trains, and to give them the time needed for them to complete their movement to the James the army was obliged to take up a defensive position during the whole of the 30th. To Franklin, with one of his divisions, that of Smith, assisted by Richardson's division of Sumner's corps, was assigned the task of preventing the enemy from crossing White Oak Swamp Creek; Slocum's division of Franklin's corps, Sedgwick's division of Sumner's corps, and Heintzelman's two divisions, together with McCall's division of the 5th corps, were directed to hold the *débouchés* of the Charles City, Darbytown, and New Market roads, thus covering the Quaker Road, over which the trains, soon after leaving the neighborhood of the swamp, must proceed in the direction of Malvern Hill and the James River. Near the river, and in a line at right angles to it, stood the 5th corps, ready to prevent any attempt on the part of the Confederates to seize Malvern Hill. The 5th corps was supported by the 4th. These arrangements were made by McClellan in person. He then left the field for the James River. So far as the disposition made by him of the 2d, 3d, and 6th corps was concerned, it was certainly judicious¹; in fact, it was obviously such as

¹ It may, however, be remarked that the divisions composing the different corps were not united under their own corps-commanders.

the situation called for; but it may well be questioned if one of the two corps—the 4th and 5th—which McClellan kept near the James River ought not to have been recalled, and placed within supporting distance of the troops on whom the enemy was expected to make a most formidable attack,—an attack on the success of which his hopes of breaking up the Federal army obviously rested. One corps, it would seem, would have sufficed to hold the roads to Malvern Hill bordering on the river, especially as the fire of Federal gunboats commanded the approaches from this direction.

About noon, Jackson and D. H. Hill, who had crossed the Chickahominy during the night and had marched through Savage Station, reached White Oak Swamp Creek, to find the bridges destroyed, and Franklin prepared to dispute their crossing. About the same hour Longstreet and A. P. Hill arrived by the way of the Darbytown road, to find Heintzelman's corps and McCall's division ready to oppose their further progress. Huger, who had finally got his division together, and had marched in pursuance of his orders down the Charles City road, found, on approaching the scene of action on Longstreet's left, that the road had been greatly obstructed by the enemy¹ and that his progress must be very slow. Slocum and Sedgwick were ready to make head against him as soon as he should begin an attack. Magruder, who had been ordered to support Longstreet, was subsequently ordered to support Holmes, who had been directed to march

¹ 13 W. R., 99, 789.

from the southern defences of Richmond by the New Market road; but before he had succeeded in joining him, Magruder was ordered back to support Longstreet and did not get into action during the day.

It was General Lee's intention that in this battle, which is known indifferently as that of Frayser's Farm, Nelson's Farm, or Glendale, all his divisions should participate. He expected that Huger would push through, or turn, the obstructions in his way, and would take his place on Longstreet's left; that Longstreet and A. P. Hill, assisted by Huger, would make a formidable assault on that part of the Federal army which was directly in front of them, facing westward; and that Jackson and D. H. Hill would be able to cross White Oak Swamp Creek, overcome the enemy in their front, and come in on the right and rear of the troops which were opposing Longstreet, A. P. Hill, and Huger, thus gaining for the Confederates an excellent chance for a victory. He doubtless, also, expected that the united commands of Holmes and Magruder would reach the Federal line of retreat by occupying Malvern Hill, in which case the rout of the Union army ought to be completed.

But Jackson exhibited on this day none of his customary energy and enterprise. He confined himself to cannonading the Federal troops who were south of the creek. Finding the principal bridge destroyed, one would naturally suppose that he would have attempted to discover fords higher up the creek where he could cross; but although Munford's

cavalry actually did cross at Brackett's Ford, and secure a brief lodgment on the south bank, Jackson made no attempt to follow up the advantage.¹ His inactivity has been severely criticised by both friends and foes.² In the words of Colonel Allan,—“Jackson's comparative inaction was a matter of surprise at the time, and has never been satisfactorily explained. Some have attributed it to physical exhaustion, and the demands of the campaign had been severe; but it is best to set it down as one of the few great mistakes of his marvellous career.”³

Whatever may have been the cause, the troops of Jackson and D. H. Hill remained all day on the north side of White Oak Swamp Creek and took no part in the fighting. Huger, also, found the obstructions in the roads insurmountable, and he remained out of the battle. Only Longstreet and A. P. Hill advanced to the attack, but their splendid courage and persistence proved almost too much for the troops to which they were opposed. The division of McCall, which held the centre of the Federal line, after a gallant and protracted resistance, was broken, and a part of his troops were routed and driven from the field. But Hooker's and Kearny's divisions of Heintzelman's corps, on the flanks of McCall, stood firm, and, with the assistance of Sedgwick's division, and other troops which the inactivity of Huger and Jackson enabled

¹ Colonel Munford, who commanded the detachment, says: “I never understood why he did not try the ford where I had crossed.” Stuart, 82, n.

² Dabney, 206-208; Longstreet in 2 B. & L., 402, 403; D. H. Hill, *ib.*, 389; Franklin, *ib.*, 381; 25 S. H. S., 211.

³ Allan, 121. See 2 Henderson, 60-70.

Slocum and Richardson to spare from their divisions, re-established the line in great part, and at any rate effectually prevented the Confederates from reaching the Quaker Road, on which the Federal trains were moving to Malvern Hill. The action was obstinately fought by both sides. No strategical advantage was gained by the Confederates, nor did they inflict a greater loss of men than they suffered. They captured, however, 14 cannon, and some hundreds of prisoners.

To the south, near Malvern Hill, Holmes made a demonstration against the Federal positions, but encountered such a severe fire of artillery that his troops precipitately retired in disorder, leaving two guns on the field.¹

That General Lee was badly served by two of his lieutenants,—Jackson and Huger,—in this action, cannot be gainsaid.² Had they participated in the battle, the result might certainly have been very different. Huger's division was stronger than that of Slocum, to which it was to have been opposed. The troops under Jackson and D. H. Hill would certainly have outnumbered the divisions of Smith and Richardson, which constituted Franklin's command. But Jackson had to get over the fords, and deploy, and advance on the south side of the creek, and this, in presence of such able officers as Franklin, Smith, and Richardson, would not have been an easy matter. It is useless to speculate on the result of such a contest.³ But it is easy to see that General

¹ 13 W. R., 910, 911; 2 B. & L., 390.

² Allan, 121.

³ See Franklin's remarks in 2 B. & L., 381.

Lee lost, through the inefficiency of Jackson and Huger, a great many of his chances of success.

In this battle General Lee commanded in person the Army of Northern Virginia, stationing himself where the fighting was going on, and where he could superintend the operations of Longstreet and A. P. Hill. General McClellan, on the other hand, after giving in the morning certain directions to his corps-commanders, but apparently without handing over the command to any one of them, rode down to Malvern Hill, and even as far as Haxall's Landing, and conferred with Captain Rodgers of the navy in regard to the place where the army had better finally be stationed. All his information as to the details and results of this most important battle was obtained for him by his aides.¹ It is almost incredible that any intelligent man should have acted as General McClellan acted on this critical day of the 30th of June. He had, on the afternoon of the 29th, ordered Fitz-John Porter to move with his corps "that night by the direct road to the elevated and cleared lands (Malvern Hill) on the north bank of Turkey Creek, there to select and hold a position behind which the army and all its trains could be withdrawn with safety." And "Keyes was to move by a different road and form to" Porter's "right and rear."² There was therefore no reason why McClellan should have left his post to go to Malvern Hill; Porter could attend to the task of laying out the position as well as he could himself. And as for conferring with the naval officers, that duty could certainly

¹ 12 W. R., 64-67.

² 2 B. & L., 407.

have been entrusted to the chief-of-engineers of the army, General Barnard. If Jackson, by one of those unexpected and bewildering manœuvres of which he gave several examples in his brief career, had gained a dangerous advantage over McClellan's corps-commanders, who shall say that they would not have needed their general? If his army had been beaten on that day, McClellan would have been cashiered, and justly. That the Federal corps-commanders,—although cordially and efficiently co-operating with each other,—acted on this day without a head, is evidenced by the fact that, at night, Franklin (as he says himself) “took the responsibility of moving” his “command to the James River.”¹ He informed Generals Heintzelman and Sumner of his decision,²—and a very wise decision it undoubtedly was,—yet Sumner afterwards complained because he was by Franklin's action obliged to fall back.³ Heintzelman also seems to have felt aggrieved on being informed that Franklin had decided to leave his position.⁴ Fortunately for the welfare of the army, these corps-commanders acted as they ought to have done, but it is not always that good sense is found controlling men's conduct in such emergencies; it is never safe for an army, in presence of the enemy, to be without its commanding general.⁵ It is true, everything turned out well, or fairly well, for the Federal cause; but it was due to no foresight of McClellan's that Jackson

¹ 13 W. R., 431.² 2 B. & L., 379.⁴ *Ib.*, 101.³ 13 W. R., 51.⁵ See Heintzelman's testimony in 1 C. W. (1863,) 358.

did not exert himself to cross the creek, and that Huger did not make his way to the battle-field; and had the three corps been routed on this day in the absence of their commander, what could have shielded McClellan from the condemnation of the army and the public?

The battle of Glendale (or Frayser's Farm) closed the second act in the drama of the "Seven Days' Battles." The attempt to break up the orderly retreat of the Federal army there failed, just as the attempt of the day before at Savage Station to crush the rear-guard failed. General Lee's opportunity of striking the army of his antagonist a fatal blow during its change of base had now passed away. The critical period of the movement was over.

During the evening and night of the 30th of June the Federal force which had maintained itself at Glendale fell back without molestation and in good order to Malvern Hill, reaching this position soon after daylight of July 1st. As soon as it was light enough to see, the troops were assigned to their proper places by McClellan, assisted by Porter, who had been on the ground with his corps since 9 A.M. of the previous day, and Barnard, the chief-of-engineers. Besides the 5th corps, the 4th corps was also here, and the reserve artillery. Here, also, were the trains of the army, and the great herd of beef-cattle. Here the wearied troops of the 2d, 3d, and 6th corps rested and awaited the attack of the enemy.

The position of Malvern Hill was one of great natural strength, and it had been thoroughly ex-

amined by Fitz-John Porter, who had, as we have said, been there since nine o'clock on the morning of the 30th, and whose ability for such a task as this had been abundantly demonstrated by the excellent dispositions he had made of his own corps at the battle of Gaines's Mill on the 27th of June. The whole Army of the Potomac was now united. Not a single regiment had been cut off. All the artillery of the army, except about 50 pieces, nearly all of which had been taken in action, was here,—some 250 guns in all. There had been time for General Hunt to post the reserve artillery, and this task he had finished with his well-known skill. All the forenoon was spent in posting the troops and guns, rectifying the lines, reconnoitring the approaches by which the Confederates must advance if they proposed again to try the issue of battle, and resting. There was abundance of time for everything, and there was every reason for thankfulness and for confidence in the Federal camp. To use the language of Gen. D. H. Hill, the Federal troops were “strongly posted on a commanding hill, all the approaches to which could be swept by artillery, and were guarded by swarms of infantry securely sheltered by fences, ditches, and ravines. Tier after tier of batteries were grimly visible on the plateau, rising in the form of an amphitheatre. One flank was protected by Turkey Creek, and the other by gunboats. We [*i.e.*, the Confederates] could only reach the first line of batteries by traversing an open space of from 300 to 400 yards, exposed to a murderous fire of grape and canister from the artillery,

and musketry from the infantry. If that first line were carried, another and another, still more difficult, remained in the rear."¹

General Hill states that even before he was aware of the strength of the Federal position he had expressed to Generals Lee, Longstreet, and Jackson his disapprobation of a further pursuit, and that an examination of the position satisfied him that an attack on it "could not but be hazardous to" the Confederate "arms."² There may perhaps have been some hesitation even in General Lee's mind as to ordering an assault, for Longstreet says that at a little after 3 P.M. he was given to understand that the enemy's position was considered too strong to admit of an attack.³ Be this as it may, however, General Lee decided to assault the Federal position.

The country which surrounded Malvern Hill was "broken and thickly wooded, and was traversed nearly throughout by a swamp, passable at but few places and difficult at those."⁴ Of this country the Confederate officers were, furthermore, entirely ignorant. It took nearly the whole day to get their troops into position. The difficulties of the ground were such that their artillery could not be brought up in sufficient quantity to make any impression on the Federal lines. The attack had to be made over an open space, which was not only swept by the Federal batteries on the heights, but was within

¹ 13 W. R., 627; see also Jackson's Report, *ib.*, 557; Lee's Report, *ib.*, 496.

² *Id.*, 628; *cf.* 2 B. & L., 391.

³ 13 W. R., 760.

⁴ Lee's Report, 13 W. R., 496.

range of the fire from their formidable gunboats in the James River. The ground was so broken, and the different bodies of the Confederate troops were necessarily so separated and hidden from each other, that concert of action was practically impossible; and yet without concert of action success was manifestly out of the question.

It was given out that the signal for a general advance should be a shout from Armistead's brigade of Huger's division, which was to begin the action by an assault on the works immediately in its front. Under the impression that he heard this signal, D. H. Hill, late in the afternoon, pushed forward his division, only to find his troops unsupported, and, in spite of their gallant efforts, they were repulsed with great loss. Jackson ordered out two divisions to assist Hill, but they could not come up in time to be of any assistance. Finally, the division of Huger,—the only division in the Confederate army that had not been engaged in the previous combats,—sprang forward, supported by that of Magruder, and a desperate assault was made on the Federal left. But in spite of the most daring courage on the part of officers and men, they were driven back with great slaughter. The Confederate batteries which attempted to cover these assaults were subjected to a concentrated fire from the Union guns, and speedily forced from the field. There were also other isolated, useless, and unsuccessful attempts, each resulting in a bloody repulse. The failure of the Confederates was complete; for, although at some points their infantry almost reached the bat-

teries, and the supporting Federal regiments were relieved from time to time and other troops sent to take their places by the vigilant officers who directed the fighting of the Union troops, absolutely no impression was made on the Federal lines.¹ The action lasted only from four o'clock till dark, but the Confederates lost somewhat over 5000 men killed and wounded.² The Federal loss has been estimated at about one third of that number.³

That General Lee should have expected to drive the Union army from such a strong position as Malvern Hill, which he could see (as he tells us in his Report) was crowned with formidable batteries and occupied by a large army, has always been a subject of wonder, especially when we know that he had not been able to station his artillery to advantage, and that his army was so broken up by the nature of the ground that it could hardly act as a unit. Add to this, that it was evident that all assaults must be made over open ground, where the troops would inevitably be exposed to the severest artillery and musketry fire. We repeat, it is not easy to believe that General Lee expected his troops under such disadvantageous conditions to drive their enemies from this strong position. Yet we must believe that he did expect success, or he would not have ordered the attack. The truth probably is, that he entirely mistook the temper of the Federal troops.⁴ He, in a way, deceived himself by looking

¹ Webb, 167.

² Allan, 135.

³ Swinton, 163.

⁴ "It was this belief in the demoralization of the Federal army that made our leader risk the attack." D. H. Hill, 2 B. & L., 391. Cf. Allan, 136.

at the events of the last few days as if they were incidents accompanying the victorious career of an army that had driven its antagonist from point to point in a series of successful combats, until the retreating foe had made a last, but despairing, stand for existence. This was, no doubt, the way in which the public, North as well as South, looked at the whole campaign; even such a careful writer as Colonel Allan says: "80,000 Confederates had attacked this [the Federal] army of 105,000 men in its chosen [*sic*] position, and had driven it from Mechanicsville and Cold Harbor across the Chickahominy and thence to the James River."¹ But these statements are misleading. The Federal position athwart the Chickahominy was not "chosen" as a position to be defended; it was taken up because reinforcements were expected from Fredericksburg. When General Lee was seen to be determined to break up his communications with White House, General McClellan made no effort to maintain them; and though with an illogical procrastination he delayed for twenty-four hours giving the order to march,—a delay, by the way, which cost him all the fighting at Savage Station, Glendale, and Malvern Hill,—he had nevertheless fully made up his mind to retire to the James. The movement of the Army of the Potomac from the Chickahominy to the James was not the result of the Confederate attacks on it; the movement was dictated by the absolute necessity of establishing a new base of supplies; and it would have gone on all the more rapidly

¹ Allan, 148.

and smoothly if the Confederate army had not undertaken to interfere with it. The marching away of the Federal army after each engagement was not because it had been beaten; it was simply going on with the movement to the James. All this is surely very plain; yet it seems pretty certain that General Lee (like Colonel Allan) took a different and a thoroughly mistaken view of the whole situation on the day of Malvern Hill. He found out his error by the time the action was over. The Federal position on Malvern Hill was wisely selected; the troops and guns were skilfully posted on it; the lines were firmly and handsomely held; the assailants, apparently expecting to find irresolution and weakness, were met by coolness and determination; and the result of the action was never for a moment in doubt.¹

Porter and Hunt, after the battle, advised McClellan to hold the position, and, if possible, to resume the offensive.² Sumner, though not volunteering his advice, was of the same opinion.³ It is said that some of Stonewall Jackson's division-commanders thought it likely that McClellan would take the offensive the next morning, and that in their opinion their army was in no condition to resist him.⁴ It would certainly seem that it might have been

¹ "The author, as an eye-witness, can assert that never for an instant was the Union line broken, or their guns in danger." Webb, 167.

² 2 B. & L., 422, 423.

³ 1 C. W. (1863), 366.

⁴ "The fourteen brigades that had been so badly repulsed were much demoralized. But there were six divisions intact, and they could have made a formidable fight on the 2d." D. H. Hill, in 2 B. & L., 394.

arranged to supply the Union army at Malvern Hill with provisions and ammunition, at any rate for a time. But Captain Rodgers of the navy was of opinion that transports could not safely be brought up the river above City Point, owing to the channel being commanded from the opposite shore.¹ Hence McClellan, who was anxious only to find a safe and permanent location for his army, and was in no mood to undertake the offensive at this moment,* ordered the troops to fall back to Harrison's Landing. The retreat was effected the next day without interruption; but the soldiers were by this time greatly exhausted by marching and fighting, and undoubtedly these constant movements away from Richmond, followed as the army had been all the time by its watchful and aggressive foe, must have had a discouraging influence on the troops. Fortunately for them, however, the Confederate soldiers were equally weary, and their last effort had been so unsuccessful that another assault was hardly to be apprehended. The march to Harrison's Landing was made in a heavy rain, and the roads were unusually bad; nevertheless the artillery and trains were safely transported, and on the evening of July 2d the Army of the Potomac had successfully effected its memorable change of base from the Pamunkey to the James. Within a day or two proper positions were taken up, the neighboring heights were fortified, and the situation of the army was rendered secure and comfortable.

The total loss of the Federals in these seven days

¹ 12 W. R., 65, 70.

of marching and fighting was 1734 killed, 8062 wounded, and 6053 missing; in all, 15,849.¹ Of those reported missing, half, perhaps, were killed or wounded. The total loss of the Confederate army was 3286 killed, 15,909 wounded, and 940 missing,—in all, 20,135.² The greater loss suffered by the Confederates is easily accounted for. In all the engagements they were the attacking party. The Union army lost 52 guns; the Confederate army lost only two. Colors were captured by both sides, but not many. The successes in battle had been pretty equally divided. The Confederates had won the battle of Gaines's Mill on the 27th of June. They had been unsuccessful at Allen's Farm and Savage Station on the 29th. The battle of Glendale on the 30th was a very severe action; but while the Confederates routed one of the Federal divisions and captured some guns, the battle was really without any decisive tactical success for them, and, strategically, it was undoubtedly a success for their opponents.³ On the field of Malvern Hill, July 1st, the Confederates had suffered a total repulse, with very severe loss. Here the fighting ended.

Nevertheless, the moral and political effect of the whole series of movements and battles was entirely to the advantage of the Confederates. "Facts are stubborn things"; and there was no denying that, by these operations, General McClellan had been forced to give up his position on the Chickahominy, where he was within sight of the steeples of Richmond, and to retire, followed,—pursued, in fact,—by

¹ 2 B. & L., 315.

² *Id.*, 317.

³ *Id.*, 375, n.

his enemies, to the river James, to a point twenty or thirty miles from the Confederate capital. His losses in men, particularly the number of "missing," aggregating, as it did, over 6000, the destruction of so many valuable stores at White House and on the railroad, his losing over fifty guns,—all these things affected the minds of people, North and South. The abrupt change of the part played by the Federal general from the *rôle* of the invader to that of the retreating and pursued enemy was too dramatic not to arrest general attention. It was in vain that careful observers pointed out to the Northern public that the Union army had fought as bravely, and, on the whole, as successfully, as its adversary, that it had lost fewer men, and that it was now in a much better position in a strategical sense than it was before the "Seven Days' Battles" began; these considerations sounded like attempts at excuse and palliation, and they were impatiently disregarded. And though the popular criticism was not fully warranted, it yet had to be admitted by the best friends of McClellan and the most sanguine supporters of the war in the North that the Peninsular campaign up to this point had resulted in failure, and that there was no probability of a speedy renewal of offensive operations by the Army of the Potomac.

On the other hand, the joy in Richmond knew no bounds. General Lee was the hero of the hour, as he deserved to be. By boldly anticipating his antagonist in taking the initiative the moment Jackson's arrival from the Valley enabled him to do so, he had, by attacking the line of communications of

the Federal army with White House, forced McClellan either to fight him on the north side of the Chickahominy, or to retire from the neighborhood of the capital in search of a new base of operations. McClellan chose the latter course; and in the difficult and perilous movement which this choice rendered imperative, Lee was able to inflict losses upon and to make captures from his adversary, who was compelled by the necessity of the case to retire to a point on the James River several marches from Richmond. The Confederate cause was relieved from a pressing danger, and the public gratitude was deep and hearty.

General Lee himself, it may be remarked, was far from being satisfied with his success. "Under ordinary circumstances," he says in his Report,¹ "the Federal army should have been destroyed." It is not easy to see why such an expectation should have been cherished. General Lee began the campaign by putting himself in a position where, owing to the situation of the ground, he could not observe the movements of his antagonist. Nor was this all. The larger part of his army was separated from that of his adversary by an unfordable river, so that his antagonist inevitably had the start of him in any movement of over twenty-four hours. In fact, if McClellan had given his orders for the retreat to the James at midnight of the 26th instead of waiting (for no reason whatever) until midnight of the 27th, —in other words, if he had recognized as early as the facts warranted that his communications with White House were lost, and that the sooner he

¹ 13 W. R., 497.

started for the James the better,—General Lee would not have been able to catch up with him at all. This delay was McClellan's great fault in this campaign. It certainly imperilled the safety of his army. Lee's errors consisted, first, in not clearly recognizing that a much smaller force than that which he assembled on the north bank of the Chickahominy would have compelled the abandonment of the Federal communications with the Pamunkey,¹ and secondly, that McClellan's most probable recourse in that emergency would be to seek a base near Malvern Hill. If he had correctly viewed these elements of the problem before him, he would have retained the greater part of his army in the lines of Richmond, and thus would have been able by means of his cavalry to interfere most seriously with the possession by the Federal troops of the roads to the James River, and also to bring a much larger force to bear upon the Federal columns on their flank march to the James, than he actually succeeded in doing. It is true that, had he adopted this course, Porter would not have been beaten at Gaines's Mill; but the actual loss in killed, wounded, and prisoners inflicted on this corps was the only damage sustained by the Federal army from this defeat. The 5th corps, by its prompt movement to Malvern Hill, secured that all-important position; and, on the day of the battle, it held its own as tenaciously as if it had never been defeated at all. The loss suffered at Gaines's Mill was a matter of very small consequence to the Army of the Potomac. But if General Lee had had at Savage Station and

¹ But see Longstreet, 152.

Glendale 25,000 more men under his hand, these actions might very possibly have turned out very serious defeats for the Federal army. That his force on these two critical occasions was so inadequate to the needs of the opportunities presented, was mainly due to his having, on the 26th and 27th of June, put the greater part of his army on the north bank of the Chickahominy in the belief that McClellan would retreat, not to the James, but to Fortress Monroe.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II.

1. (*Ante*, page 104.) That General McClellan had in our judgment no just ground of complaint against the Administration because the President detained McDowell's corps in the neighborhood of Washington, on learning from the report of Generals Hitchcock and Thomas that General McClellan had not left for the defence of the Capital the force which the corps-commanders had considered necessary, we have distinctly stated. The question whether the detention of McDowell's corps was or was not under the circumstances wise from a military point of view, we reserved for further consideration.¹

It has been strongly urged by writers of authority² that, inasmuch as the success of McClellan's plans depended, in his own view of the military problem before him, upon his being able to dispose of the corps of McDowell, it would have been on the whole better for the Government to send it to him, so as to give his campaign every chance of success. This would, of course, have involved taking the risk of an attack on Washington with its insufficient garrison; but then it might certainly be said that the stronger McClellan's army was, the more likely it

¹ See Part I., 246, 252, 254.

² Webb, 58, 180; Swinton, 105.

was that the Confederate Government would concentrate all their forces to resist his advance and save Richmond from capture.

This argument is really the same as that advanced by General McClellan himself to justify his disobedience of orders in the matter of the troops to be left for the defence of the Capital. Washington, he maintained, could be better defended by a vigorous movement on Richmond than in any other way. The Government, on the other hand, as we have seen, held a different opinion, and insisted that a force, the size of which was fixed by the opinion of the corps-commanders, should be left for the sole purpose of protecting the Capital. In our judgment, taking account of the great uncertainty which must always attend offensive military operations undertaken by inexperienced commanders in control of armies which are put into the field for the first time, and considering the immense importance from a political as well as a military point of view of retaining a secure hold on Washington, the Government was perfectly right.

Now, had anything occurred since McClellan went to the Peninsula which materially changed the situation? We think this question must be answered in the negative. McClellan, though needing McDowell's corps for his flank movement on Gloucester, by which he expected to compel the speedy evacuation of the lines of Yorktown, could nevertheless accomplish his ends by siege operations. He wrote on April 20th to the Secretary of War: "As it is, I will win, but I must not be blamed if success is delayed. I do not feel that I am answerable for the

delay of victory.”¹ It is clear from this, as well as from all the evidence, that he did not conceive that the safety of his army was in any way dependent on McDowell’s corps being sent to him, but only that he could achieve his end much sooner if he should receive this reinforcement. Had it been a question of the safety of the Army of the Potomac, the Government might very possibly have deemed it best to incur some temporary risk, even in the vital matter of protecting the Capital. But that was not the case here.

It may be remarked in this connection that it was one thing to send McDowell’s corps to Fortress Monroe, when McClellan’s army was lying in front of works which he himself considered too strong to be assaulted successfully, and was dependent for its daily supplies on the presumed inability of the *Merrimac* to defeat the *Monitor*,—for all its food and forage came to it by water,—and quite another thing to send McDowell from Fredericksburg to Richmond, when the Army of the Potomac had emerged from its precarious position on the Peninsula, and was threatening the Confederate capital. For the diversion of McDowell’s corps on the 24th of May to the Shenandoah Valley, there was, in our judgment, no sufficient excuse. At that moment, Jackson was actively engaged in pursuing Banks down the Valley; and had the Federal Government been able to direct the movements of both the hostile armies, no more opportune time could have been selected than this for the concentration of the bulk of the United

¹ McClellan’s O. S., 283.

States forces in the neighborhood of Richmond. Jackson, assuredly, was at that moment not concerning himself with the defence of Richmond, but with the tempting project of driving Banks to and across the Potomac; hence there was every chance that the advent of McDowell on the Chickahominy would have enabled McClellan to deal with Johnston's army before it could have been reinforced from Jackson's command. As for the other troops which Lee obtained before he began the Seven Days' Battles, they were, on May 24th, hundreds of miles away.

2. (*Ante*, page 135.) Three days before Porter's expedition to Hanover Court House, McClellan had been informed that the movement of McDowell to join him had been suspended, and that that officer had been ordered to the Shenandoah Valley. He must have known perfectly well that it was altogether uncertain when this operation would be terminated, and when McDowell would be ready to join him, if, indeed, he ever would be. He was also fully aware of the fact that the line of the railroad, for the greater part of the distance between White House and the Chickahominy, was not covered by the position of the army. He knew that the results of Porter's victory could not be expected to be permanent; and that it was in the power of the enemy at any time, by making a serious demonstration on White House, to endanger the position of the army. He knew, moreover, that to ensure prompt and adequate intercommunication between the separated wings of his army he would have to throw

nearly a dozen¹ bridges across the swampy and treacherous Chickahominy. Why, with all these facts in mind, General McClellan did not at once change his base from the Pamunkey to the James, where his *dépôts* of supplies would be under the protection of the fleet, and could be moved from point to point so as to conform to the changing positions of the army, has always puzzled those who have studied this campaign.² He says himself that as "the order for the co-operation of General McDowell was simply suspended, not revoked," he was "not at liberty to abandon the northern approach" to Richmond.³ Granting that this was so,—which is by no means certain,—why could he not have requested permission from the Government to change his base of operations to the James River? The truth probably is that, at that moment, General McClellan did not appreciate the desirability of making this change in his campaign, and he therefore remained where he was, although the reason which had induced him to advance by way of the Pamunkey,—the expected co-operation of McDowell's command,—no longer existed.

¹ 12 W. R., 30.

² Webb, 87; Swinton, 140.

³ 12 W. R., 31.





CHAPTER III.

LEE TAKES THE OFFENSIVE IN THE EAST.

THUS were the Federal aggressive campaigns in the spring of 1862 brought to a close. McClellan, withdrawn from the neighborhood of Richmond, was resting with his army within the lines of Harrison's Landing on the James River, waiting until he should receive sufficient reinforcements to enable him again to take the offensive. Halleck, apparently satisfied with the barren success of the capture of Corinth, dispersed his fine army of more than 100,000 men, allowed the Confederates to recruit their strength without molestation, and gave Bragg (who had succeeded Beauregard, whose health required a leave of absence) all the leisure he needed to devise plans for the recovery of the States of Tennessee and Kentucky by a force still formidable in numbers, and which had not been disorganized by its retirement from Corinth. For a time, both in the East and in the West, the war was at a standstill; the force of the Federal attack had apparently spent itself; an opportunity was presented to the Confederates in the West of retrieving their disasters; and the distrust which the Washington administration entertained toward McClellan made it doubtful

whether he would be permitted to resume his campaign against Richmond. But before we proceed to describe the operations of the summer, we must say a word about the military situation in the North.

The losses of both the contestants in the last few months had been great; but while the Confederate authorities had adopted a system of conscription for filling the gaps in their wasted battalions, the Northern Government with inexcusable fatuity had in April actually stopped recruiting,¹ and nothing was thought of, at least in the Eastern States, in the summer of 1862, but raising new organizations. Nothing could exceed the infatuation of the people on this subject. The old regiments, which had acquired military discipline and knowledge of warfare by the arduous experiences of the camp, the march, and the battle-field, were actually allowed to waste away; the invaluable schools of the soldier which they furnished for the raw recruits were almost entirely neglected; few were the accessions of fresh men received by their diminished ranks; popular enthusiasm was mainly directed to the raising and equipment of brand-new regiments, none of which could possibly be of much service until months had been passed in learning the elements of military life and conduct. In some of the Western States a healthier standard prevailed; in several of them the efforts of the authorities were chiefly directed to the reinforcement of the existing organizations; and the young men who filled the gaps in the lines of the

¹ The order of the War Department is quoted in McClellan's O. S., 258.

veteran battalions of Illinois and Wisconsin learned their trade in half the time which was required to make the new regiments of Pennsylvania and Massachusetts capable of efficient service in the field.

Nor was this the only mistake made by the Federal Government in the summer of 1862. Levies of troops engaged to serve only for nine months were accepted ; and several of the Eastern States were unwise enough to adopt this shallow scheme, and to send the flower of their fighting men into organizations which from the necessity of the case could hardly be made fit for active service until the day of their disbandment was plainly within sight.

For these mistakes, or, to speak with more correctness, for these failures on the part of the North, and especially of the Eastern States, to rise to the clear and unmistakable call of duty in this most vital matter of recruiting their armies for the enormous task which yet lay before them, the administration of President Lincoln must be held mainly responsible. Had he and the Secretary of War clearly and strongly put before the country the true course to be pursued, namely, that the first thing to do was to fill up the existing regiments to their full strength by sending to them men enlisted for three years, there is great reason to believe that the country would cheerfully have responded to the appeal. At any rate, it was the governors of the Northern States who, in the summer of 1862, urged the President to issue a call for 300,000 men ; the Administration was only too willing to see the States take the initiative in what (it was feared) would be an

unpopular measure. It is, of course, not impossible that Mr. Lincoln may have judged that to demand from the people that the old regiments, which must of course be relied on to do the immediate fighting, should be filled up at once, instead of assenting to the adoption of the seemingly easier, and certainly more attractive course, of raising new regiments, which could not be expected to take the field immediately, would be to make a demand from which the patriotism of the people would shrink. If that were his opinion, he can hardly be blamed for acting upon it. And yet it does seem as if asking the Northern people to recruit their armies in the most economical, most efficient, and most approved method was not asking too much of them; and it is our own belief that if the case had been properly put to them they would have responded with comparative unanimity, and with a hearty devotion to the call of their country. The improvement in the composition and strength of the Northern armies, and particularly of the Army of the Potomac, which would have been effected by filling up the ranks of the old regiments, would have been most marked. The new recruits, after, of course, a brief period spent in camps of instruction, would have been at once brought under the influence of the scenes and experiences of actual service; they would have been placed under the control of veteran commissioned and warrant officers, and would have been thrown into the comradeship of private soldiers who had had valuable experience in real warfare. Whatever could have been done to make them soldiers would have been afforded

them without stint; and the result to the Northern armies could not but have been far more beneficial than the arrival among them of full regiments of raw troops, wholly deficient in experience, and unable for months to compare in efficiency with the veteran battalions of 1861, whose diminished and diminishing numbers constituted a contrast painful to behold, and anything but creditable to the discernment and gratitude of the Northern people.¹

Let us now return to Virginia, and see what was the military situation there in the early part of July, 1862, at the conclusion of the Seven Days' Battles.

The army of General Lee was concentrated in the neighborhood of Richmond; Jackson, it will be remembered, when he left the Shenandoah Valley in the last part of June, took with him all his force except a few troops whom he left at Harrisonburg. The communication between Richmond and the Valley by the Virginia Central railroad remained unbroken. The Federal commander at Fredericksburg had indeed been able to destroy the bridge over the North Anna River on the Richmond and Fredericksburg railroad, but that over the South Anna, on the Virginia Central railroad, had not been touched.² No doubt it was well guarded. The all-important junction of this railroad with the Orange and Alexandria railroad at Gordonsville was also defended, as was Charlottesville, from which place one branch

¹ Cf. McClellan to Governor Morgan of New York, July 15, 1862, 14 W. R., 323; also, McClellan to Governor Olden of New Jersey, *ib.*, 347.

² 18 W. R., 433.

of the road runs westwardly to Staunton, in the upper part of the Valley, and another southwestwardly to Lynchburg, where it meets the East Tennessee and Georgia railroad coming from Chattanooga and the southwest. The most exposed point in this system was Gordonsville, for as Gordonsville was a station on the Orange and Alexandria railroad, a Federal force could advance upon it easily, and be supplied directly from Alexandria.

To understand the condition and positions of the United States forces at this time, it will be necessary to go back a little.

The Federal Government, it will be recollected, had, in March, established three independent military Departments in this part of Virginia: the Mountain Department, comprising the region lying west of the Shenandoah Valley, under General Frémont, the Department of the Shenandoah, under General Banks, and the Department of the Rappahannock, under General McDowell. About the middle of May the force under McDowell was augmented by Shields's division, which was withdrawn from the command of Banks. The intention was that, on May 26th, McDowell, with the four divisions of Shields, Ord, King, and McCall, and a brigade of cavalry under Bayard,—at least 40,000 men in all,—should march on Richmond and unite with the army under McClellan. On the news of Jackson's irruption into the Shenandoah Valley, however, the President, on May 24th, ordered McDowell and Frémont to march in opposite directions from their respective encampments into the Shenandoah Valley, and endeavor, to-

gether, to overwhelm Jackson. This plan, as we know, failed; Jackson, after having driven Banks's diminished command across the Potomac, effected his escape from the converging forces of McDowell and Frémont. As soon as this was known, and even prior to the two smart actions of Cross Keys and Port Republic, fought on June 8th and 9th, between Jackson's force and the pursuing columns of Frémont and Shields, which closed this brief campaign, the Washington authorities determined to resume at once the plan which had been interrupted, and to send McDowell, as soon as his troops could be collected together, to Richmond, by way of Fredericksburg.¹ McDowell himself was all anxiety to go. He had earnestly and strenuously opposed the President's scheme of attempting to cut off Jackson,² and yet he had been charged by some of the friends of McClellan with having originated the scheme from an unwillingness to further McClellan's success. Hence he exerted himself to the utmost to collect his scattered divisions, so that he might march on Richmond as soon as possible.³ He had correctly divined the purpose of Jackson's raid,—that it was designed to divert the force destined to move on Richmond,—and he now was morally certain that Jackson intended, after having disturbed the organization and distribution of the Federal forces, as he had to such a lamentable extent done, to rejoin Lee for an attack upon McClellan before he, McDowell, could go to his relief.⁴

¹ 18 W. R., 354, 363.

² *Id.*, 220, 221.

³ *Id.*, 391.

⁴ *Id.*, 387, 391, 392.

But McDowell could not obtain a prompt and successful concentration of his scattered command. One division of his corps, that of McCall, was at once, at McClellan's urgent request, sent by water to join the Army of the Potomac. Of the other three divisions, that of Shields remained long in the Valley, exhausted and almost disorganized by its forced marches and partial defeat, and that of Ord, who was soon replaced by Ricketts, was detained at Front Royal until Banks could arrange to hold that place.¹ Banks in fact thought, as late as June 19th, that the enemy intended to make another movement down the Valley and he desired to detain Shields in the Valley, and Ricketts at Front Royal, for greater security.² It was not till the 19th and 23d that the divisions of Ricketts and Shields arrived at Manassas and Bristoe Station.³ Shields's division was found to be in such poor condition⁴ that it was broken up and the troops were distributed in other commands. Two brigades were sent to the Peninsula; the other two were added to Banks's corps. King's division was all this time at Falmouth, opposite Fredericksburg, with a small guard in that city,⁵ and his troops and those of Ricketts, at Manassas Junction, constituted, at the end of June, McDowell's entire force, which numbered at the outside about 24,000 men.⁶

¹ 18 W. R., 382.

² *Ib.*, 411, 415-417.

³ *Ib.*, 410, 427.

⁴ *Ib.*, 431.

⁵ *Ib.*, 391.

⁶ *Ib.*, 448; *cf.* 14 W. R., 296, where Pope puts the number at 19,000.

In the Shenandoah Valley, near Middletown and Strasburg,¹ was the command of Banks, and all of Frémont's troops who were not in the Kanawha Valley under General Cox. Banks's force had been strengthened by two brigades which had been at and near Harper's Ferry, and were now consolidated in a division under General Sigel. These troops and Banks's old command, a division under Williams, numbering in all about 12,000 or 13,000 men,² were in good condition. It was quite otherwise with the troops of Frémont then in the Valley, which consisted chiefly of Blenker's former division. This division had had an unlucky history. Detached from the Army of the Potomac on the eve of the commencement of the Peninsular Campaign,³ the troops were several weeks in reaching their destination in Frémont's Department, and they suffered unusual hardships and even losses on the march.⁴ In their recent crossing of the mountains in the attempt to cut off Jackson they were greatly hindered and distressed by the condition of the roads, and the subsequent forced marches told heavily on the men. At the close of these unprepared-for and trying experiences the division was greatly reduced in strength and efficiency.⁵ It numbered about 8000 men.⁶

The ill-success which had attended the attempt of the President and the Secretary of War to co-ordinate the movements of three armies in three different Departments suggested to them the desirability

¹ 18 W. R., 428, 434.

² *Ib.*, 428, 434; *cf.* 437.

³ Part I., 255.

⁴ 18 W. R., 81, 83, 88, 93, 96, 101-103.

⁵ *Ib.*, 379-381, 455.

⁶ *Ib.*, 448.

of uniting these commands under one head. Accordingly, on the 26th of June, an order¹ was issued by Mr. Lincoln consolidating the forces under Frémont, Banks, and McDowell, and the troops in Washington, into one army, to be called the Army of Virginia, and placing at its head Major-General John Pope, whose recent successes at New Madrid and Island No. 10, on the Mississippi River, had brought him into considerable prominence.²

This concentration of the three separate commands under one direction was certainly a wise measure; but the selection of a Western general for the control of one of the armies in Virginia was at that stage in the war a matter of questionable policy. It would probably have been better if the Government had given the command to McDowell, who was an officer of excellent abilities and was, moreover, familiar with the country. All three of the superseded generals were seniors to Pope, and Frémont absolutely refused to serve under him.³ His corps, now styled the 1st corps of the Army of Virginia, was accordingly turned over to Sigel,⁴ whose place as a division-commander under Banks was filled by Augur.⁵ Banks and McDowell cheerfully took their orders from Pope; the former as commanding the 2d corps, and the latter the 3d.

General Pope assumed command of the Army of Virginia on June 27th, and fixed his headquarters in Washington,⁶ where his presence as a military ad-

¹ 18 W. R., 435.

² See Map VII., facing page 320.

³ 18 W. R., 437.

⁴ *Ib.*, 444.

⁵ *Ib.*, 537.

⁶ *Ib.*, 436.

viser was, for the time being, required by the President.¹ His task, as laid out for him in the order constituting the new army, and as understood by himself, was threefold: to "cover the City of Washington from any attacks from the direction of Richmond; to make such dispositions as were necessary to assure the safety of the Valley of the Shenandoah; and at the same time so to operate on the enemy's lines of communication in the direction of Gordonsville and Charlottesville as to draw off, if possible, a considerable force of the enemy from Richmond, and thus relieve the operations against that city of the Army of the Potomac."²

General Pope was of opinion that the first two of these objects could be best accomplished by withdrawing the corps of Banks and Sigel to the east side of the Blue Ridge. "It seemed to me," he says in his Report, "that the security of the Shenandoah Valley was not best attained by posting troops within the Valley itself, but by concentrating these forces at some point or points from which, if any attempts were made to enter the Valley of the Shenandoah from Richmond, I should be able by rapid marching to interpose between such force and the main body of the enemy and cut off its retreat."³ Banks⁴ and Sigel⁵ were accordingly (June 28th and July 4th) directed to cross the mountains by the Manassas and Luray Gaps respectively, and to take position near

¹ 18 W. R., 487. Cf. Wool to Pope, *ib.*, 488.

² 16 W. R., 21.

³ *Id.*, 21.

⁴ 18 W. R., 439, 440.

⁵ *Id.*, 453.

Sperryville.¹ At the same time (July 3d) McDowell was ordered to send Ricketts's division to Warrenton, as a support to the corps of Banks and Sigel, leaving a small force at Manassas Junction.² All these troops depended on the Orange and Alexandria railroad for their supplies.³ As for King's division, the Secretary of War insisted on its remaining at Falmouth "to protect the crossing of the Rappahannock at that point, and to protect the railroad thence to Aquia Creek, and the public buildings which had been erected at the latter place."⁴ This was contrary to General Pope's judgment. He very naturally desired to have his whole army concentrated. King was, moreover, in an exposed position, where Pope could not succor him in case he were attacked,⁵ and his force was too large to be promptly withdrawn. The Government, however, was unwilling to give up the position of Fredericksburg, connected as it was by railroad with Aquia Creek, where were wharves and storehouses,⁶ the whole constituting a base of operations for a movement against Richmond. But it would have been wiser under the circumstances to hold the place with a small force, which could easily have been withdrawn, if threatened,⁷ and to send the bulk of King's division at once to Pope, whose army was none too large to meet the

¹ Winchester and Front Royal were, however, retained and fortified. 18 W. R., 468, 471.

² *Ib.*, 450.

³ *Ib.*, 453; 14 W. R., 296.

⁴ 16 W. R., 21.

⁵ Allan, 179; 18 W. R., 917.

⁶ These facilities were, however, far from being adequate to the needs of a large army; 18 W. R., 557, 561, 562.

⁷ 18 W. R., 556.

possible emergencies of the campaign. King (if we may anticipate a little) remained at Falmouth until some days after the arrival at that place of General Burnside¹ with his North Carolina troops on August 3d, when he was ordered to join Pope. He accomplished this on the 11th,² but not until after the first battle of the campaign (Cedar Mountain) had been fought.

The efforts of the Federal Government to restore in northern Virginia by the 26th of June as favorable a situation as that which existed on May 26th, when McDowell's army of over 40,000 men was ordered to march from Fredericksburg to join the Army of the Potomac, the right wing of which was then north of the Chickahominy, had been, as we have just seen, unsuccessful. The divisions of King and Ricketts, if united, were not strong enough to warrant their undertaking to effect a junction with McClellan's army by an overland march, considering that, to defeat such an operation, General Lee might be expected to use to the full the advantages of his central position. Moreover, the Confederate army was much stronger on June 26th than it had been on May 26th. For not only was the command of Jackson in the Shenandoah Valley on May 26th, but during the month of June, Lee received large reinforcements from the Gulf States, and on June 26th Jackson had rejoined the main army. Much had been lost, beyond controversy, by breaking up the plan which promised to effect the union of the armies of McClellan and McDowell before the 1st of June.

¹ 18 W. R., 528.

² *Ib.*, 548, 560.

Whether Pope, when he had had time to post his army to his satisfaction and to form his plans, would ever have entertained the project of marching with McDowell's corps, or any other part of his army, upon Richmond, and uniting with McClellan, may be doubted, but at any rate he had no opportunity to carry out any such project. On the very day on which he was appointed to his new command (June 26th), Lee crossed to the north side of the Chickahominy with the bulk of his forces. On the next day he defeated Porter at Gaines's Mill, and McClellan began his retreat to the James River. As soon as news of the first engagements arrived in Washington, Pope urged President Lincoln to order McClellan to retire to White House, or some other point north of the Pamunkey.¹ But McClellan was already committed to the route to the James. The early days of July, therefore, saw McClellan at Harrison's Landing with some 80,000 men,² and Pope with one division (King's) at Fredericksburg, another (Ricketts's) at Warrenton, and the two corps of Sigel and Banks taking up their positions east of the Blue Ridge, near Sperryville, watching the gaps, —his entire active force, *i.e.*, over and above the garrison of Washington and the detachments left in the Shenandoah Valley, being about 47,000 men.³ The opportunity which had existed in the latter part of

¹ 16 W. R., 22.

² On July 15th McClellan gives the number of 88,665 "present for duty"; 14 W. R., 321; *cf. ib.*, 312.

³ 16 W. R., 53. Pope himself (*ib.*, 20) puts his force at only 38,000 men. But the returns for July 31, 1862, —18 W. R., 523, —give the force of the three corps—"present for duty"—as 55,879 men, including troops in the Valley, Milroy's brigade, etc. *Cf. ib.*, 428, 429, 448.

May, when a march of fifty or sixty miles from Fredericksburg would have united the army of McDowell to that of McClellan, had ceased to exist. No reinforcements could now reach McClellan except by water. The army operating against Richmond could now expect no direct help from the force covering Washington..

General Pope was unquestionably desirous of affording such assistance as he could to General McClellan. If he could not march to his assistance, as McDowell could have done in May, he might yet expect to make such demonstrations on Gordonsville and other points as would induce Lee to weaken the army which was confronting McClellan. This was, in fact, the third of the tasks which were entrusted to Pope by the order in which he was appointed to the command of the Army of Virginia. Accordingly, no sooner did he hear that McClellan had established his army at Harrison's Landing than he wrote to him a full and friendly letter,¹ giving him an account of his dispositions and plans, and asking for his views. To this McClellan replied on July 7th,² in a letter which was written apparently in an equally friendly spirit, but which, from the necessity of the case, contained no practical suggestions for Pope's conduct. There could not be, in fact, any co-operation, in the strict sense of the word, between the two armies of Pope and McClellan. Whatever might be done by one to occupy the attention of the enemy would doubtless relieve the pressure on the other, but the choice of movements to this end must

¹ 14 W. R., 295.

² *Ib.*, 306.

necessarily be left to the commander of each army, or to a commander of both armies.

It being, therefore, obviously out of the question for Pope to march to the aid of McClellan, or to be sent to him by water, leaving the Capital and the Valley exposed, his efforts were necessarily confined to attempts to seize, or, at least, to threaten, the important points of Gordonsville and Charlottesville on the Virginia Central railroad. Accordingly, on July 7th and again on July 12th, Banks was directed to occupy Culpeper with his cavalry under Hatch, and to throw out pickets for at least twenty miles in the direction of Gordonsville.¹ On the 14th Hatch was ordered to seize Gordonsville, and, if possible, Charlottesville,² with his cavalry. Hatch, however, taking with him artillery and a wagon-train, his march lacked the expected celerity of movement, and the operation failed. General Pope was greatly and justly annoyed by this failure to take Gordonsville,³ for this important capture might in all probability have been made had Hatch strictly carried out his instructions, inasmuch as Jackson, who was ordered by Lee on the 13th to proceed from Richmond to Gordonsville with two divisions,⁴ did not reach the vicinity of the place till the 19th.⁵ General Pope's object had, however, been gained, so far as this depletion of Lee's army was concerned, and the task lying before General McClellan had become to that extent easier of accomplishment.

¹ 18 W. R., 458, 467. Other expeditions in the direction of Gordonsville were made from Fredericksburg. *Ib.*, 499, 502, 503, 528, 529, 924, 925.

² *Ib.*, 473, 476.

⁴ *Ib.*, 915; 16 W. R., 176.

³ *Ib.*, 481, 484, 485.

⁵ *Ib.*, 181.

The Federal authorities, as has been said, retained their new general in the Capital, to get the benefit of his advice, until a more permanent arrangement could be made. Mr. Lincoln evidently felt keenly the need of a military adviser who should be on the spot; and he naturally thought that some one who had had actual experience in a large command would be likely to prove a more competent guide than General Hitchcock, who had for some months been on duty with the War Department, and whose abilities, which were believed to be considerable, had never been tested in the field. On the 11th of July General Halleck was appointed General-in-chief, and assigned to the command of all the land forces of the United States.¹ It is easy to see how this unfortunate selection came to be made: Halleck was at that time the most successful general in the Federal service; it was perfectly natural that he should be the choice of the President and Secretary of War, to whom his serious defects as a military man could not have become known. His appointment was also satisfactory to the public, for, as so much had been effected under his command in the West, he was generally credited with great strategic ability. All this, as we say, was perfectly natural; neither the Administration nor the public can be criticised for calling Halleck to the chief command.² But both the people and the President were before long to find out how slender was Halleck's intellectual capacity,

¹ 14 W. R., 371.

² General Pope also advised calling Halleck to Washington; 16 W. R., 22.

how entirely unmilitary was the cast of his mind, and how repugnant to his whole character was the assumption of any personal and direct control of an army in the field.¹

General Halleck was detained some days in the West, and did not arrive in Washington until July 22d.² The first thing to which his attention was called, as he says in his Report,³ was the question of the possibility of McClellan's resuming the offensive from his position at Harrison's Landing, and, if this should be found impracticable, the further question of the desirability of uniting his army to that of Pope. Up to this time it had apparently been assumed that the Army of the Potomac was to remain on the James River until it could be reinforced sufficiently to warrant another advance upon Richmond; and a large part of the troops in the Department of North Carolina had been ordered up to Virginia under General Burnside in the early part of July. They numbered some 8000 men, in two divisions, under General Reno.⁴ A body of about 5000 men under General Stevens shortly afterwards came up from South Carolina.⁵ All these troops were under Burnside's command. They were landed at Newport News, near Fortress Monroe, and the original intention was that they should join the Army of the Potomac.⁶ These troops constituted almost all the forces east of the Alleghanies at the disposal of the Government for the purpose of reinforcing Mc-

¹ Cf. Swinton, 17c.

² 18 W. R., 500.

⁴ 9 W. R., 409; 14 W. R., 305.

³ 16 W. R., 5.

⁵ 20 W. R., 367.

⁶ 9 W. R., 404, 405; 14 W. R., 300; 20 W. R., 365.

Clellan. As for General Pope's own army, that officer, as early as July 8th,¹ was considering the question of drawing largely from the force in the Kanawha Valley in West Virginia under General Cox, who had, as early as July 3d, called Pope's attention to the excellent condition of his command, and had requested active service.² Pope, however, delayed a month before issuing the requisite orders,³ and Cox's command did not reach the seat of war until the fighting in front of Washington was practically over.⁴

The Federal Government was in fact at the end of its resources for the time being. The new levies which were being raised in obedience to the call for 300,000 men, which President Lincoln issued about July 1st, in response to the offer of the governors of the Northern States,⁵ certainly could not take the field before September. McClellan did not hesitate to say that the army of General Lee numbered 200,000 men.⁶ The Army of the Potomac, with the additional troops that Burnside could bring to its assistance, would not much exceed 110,000 men,⁷ and, at the moment, there were no other troops to send to Harrison's Landing. The question was, therefore, forced upon Mr. Lincoln's mind in the first days of July, whether, assuming McClellan to be correct in his estimate of the strength of Lee's army, it was safe to allow the Army of the Potomac to remain for an indefinite time at Harrison's Landing; whether it would not be more prudent to recall it to

¹ 18 W. R., 460, 464.

² *Ib.*, 451.

³ *Ib.*, 551.

⁴ *Ib.*, 698, 722.

⁵ 5 N. & H., 446.

⁶ 12 W. R., 51.

⁷ 14 W. R., 338.

the neighborhood of Washington. For the time being, therefore, the President retained Burnside's troops near Fortress Monroe,¹ and awaited anxiously the arrival of General Halleck before committing himself in either direction.

General Halleck arrived in Washington on the 22d of July, and on the 25th he visited the army at Harrison's Landing. He found McClellan, as he stated in a "Memorandum for the Secretary of War,"² at the head of about 90,000 men, estimating the force of the enemy at "not less than 200,000" men, and yet of "opinion that, with 30,000 reinforcements, he could attack Richmond with a good chance of success." When told that the Government could promise him only 20,000 men, and that, if he could not take Richmond with that number, his troops must be withdrawn from the Peninsula and united with those of General Pope, he said that he would move on Richmond even with this small addition to his army; "there was a chance," he said, and he was "willing to try it."³ Such ill-digested, not to say inconsistent, views could not impress General Halleck, or any one else, for that matter, favorably. If General McClellan really believed that Lee had 200,000 men in and about Richmond, it was absurd for him to expect success with only 110,000. For even if he should be able to seize Petersburg by a *coup de main*, which he told Halleck it was his intention to do, could he expect to do more than maintain himself there against a force

¹ 14 W. R., 320.

² *Ib.*, 337.

³ *Ib.*, 337; *cf.* 1 C. W. (1863), 437.

so largely exceeding his own? But we strongly suspect that McClellan's estimate of the strength of Lee's army was adopted by him in the hope of obtaining such heavy reinforcements as would assure him an easy victory over an army which he had no sufficient reason to suppose much exceeded 100,000 men. If this was so, he was doomed to grievous disappointment; for Halleck, apparently impressed by the inconsistency between McClellan's attitude of willingness to proceed with only 110,000 men and his expressed belief that Lee's army numbered 200,000 men, determined at once to withdraw the Army of the Potomac from the Peninsula.

The order for the withdrawal of the army was issued on August 3d. On the next day McClellan wrote a strong letter to Halleck remonstrating against his decision.¹ In this letter he dwells on the importance of retaining the position near Richmond, and urges that the Government ought to collect troops from all other parts of the country to add to the numbers of his army. He unquestionably puts his case with great strength. "Here," he says, "directly in front of this army, is the heart of the rebellion. It is here that our resources should be collected to strike the blow which will determine the fate of this nation. All points of secondary importance elsewhere should be abandoned, and every available man brought here. A decided victory here, and the military strength of the rebellion is crushed. It matters not what partial reverses we may meet with elsewhere; here is the true defence

¹ 16 W. R., 8.

of Washington. It is here, on the bank of the James River, that the fate of the Union should be decided."

There was a great deal of force in these arguments, but General Halleck must have been surprised that they proceeded from the pen of a man who only a few days before had expressed himself as willing to try the chance of winning or losing in this most important struggle with an army only a little more than half as large as that of his antagonist. The arguments in the letter would have led logically to an avoidance of the critical conflict until the success of the Union army should have been rendered reasonably certain by its receiving very large reinforcements. But the ease with which General McClellan had a week before agreed to move on Richmond with 120,000 men against Lee's 200,000 must have considerably weakened the trust which Halleck was disposed to place in the sound judgment and consistent policy of an officer who was capable of such sudden modifications of view in such an important emergency.

General Halleck replied on the 6th.¹ He briefly stated the situation, as he understood it; namely, that, with the Army of the Potomac numbering 90,000 men, that of General Pope 40,000, and that of General Lee 200,000 or over, as General McClellan had represented it, it was unsafe to allow the two Federal armies to remain separated from each other, in a situation in which neither could help the other if attacked by a superior force, as was apparently

¹ 16 W. R., 9.

quite possible. The suggestion that the Army of the Potomac might remain where it was until reinforced sufficiently to take the offensive, he met by saying that "the months of August and September are almost fatal to whites who live on that part of the James River." He, therefore, reiterated his decision that the Army of the Potomac must prepare at once to leave the Peninsula, and suggested Fredericksburg as the place where the two armies could best be united. Here, said General Halleck, the armies would find a new base on the Rappahannock River, nearer to Richmond than Yorktown, and one which, being "between Richmond and Washington," "covers Washington from any attack by the enemy."

This letter brings out perfectly Halleck's weak points. It is evidently written simply to obtain "the best of the argument." It is conspicuous by its deliberate avoidance of any discussion of the real issues raised, and by its easy assumption of the truth of unproved statements, some of which, at any rate, he ought to have recognized as grossly erroneous. If the relative numbers of the Federal and Confederate armies were in reality as Halleck states, the situation was a most serious one for the cause of the Union. The question in this condition of affairs was whether any combinations possible to the Federal commanders could prevent Lee from crossing the Potomac with 100,000 men, and threatening not only Washington, but Baltimore, and even Philadelphia. The game was apparently in his hands. It was no time to be talking of bases of operation for

another invasion of Virginia. The only thing to be done was to cover Washington with all the forces which the United States Government could collect. Nor would it do to mass the army at Fredericksburg, for Fredericksburg was not "between Richmond and Washington," nor would its possession "cover Washington from any attack by the enemy"; this was an egregious fallacy, which Halleck was very soon to find out to his cost, and which the operations of Generals Lee and Hooker in June, 1863, were fully to demonstrate. The only thing to do with McClellan's army was to bring it right back to Alexandria, to unite with Pope's army, and to hold the line of Bull Run. But there is not a trace in General Halleck's letter of the recognition by him of such a serious state of affairs. It is evident enough that he used McClellan's enormous estimate of the size of the Confederate army as a convenient weapon which that officer had rashly put into his hands, by the use of which he could get the better of him in argument. In fact it is plain from their conversation and correspondence that neither McClellan nor Halleck really believed in the estimate, of which each of them, for reasons of his own, made use, that Lee's army was 200,000 strong. We may add that it was inexcusable for McClellan to state, as well as for Halleck to accept, such a preposterous estimate of the size of Lee's army. There had been nothing in the recent struggle to indicate that Lee's forces much exceeded those of McClellan.

As for the alleged impossibility of the Army of the Potomac remaining on the James River in Au-

gust and September on account of the unhealthiness of the climate, there was in reality no truth in it. Letterman, the Medical Director of the army, in a letter to General Williams, the Adjutant-General, dated July 18th, after recommending that certain steps be taken for the prevention of disease, concludes as follows: "I think, if these suggestions be carried into effect, that we may with reason expect the health of this army to be in as good a state as that of any army in the field."¹

But General McClellan was not proposing to remain at Harrison's Landing, but to cross the river and to move on Petersburg.² This move he had contemplated from the first moment of his deciding to operate on the line of the James³; and it was beyond a question the right movement to make. Threatening Richmond, as McClellan did, while he remained on the north side of the river, General Lee could not afford seriously to weaken the force with which he was covering the approaches to the capital⁴; while it was perfectly possible for McClellan, who possessed the control of the James, to send the greater part, or, if he thought best, the whole, of his army by water to City Point, from which place a direct road, only eight miles in length, ran to Petersburg. A well-combined movement might, therefore, easily have placed the Army of the Potomac

¹ 14 W. R., 349. But see Swinton, 171, n., and 265, n.

² 14 W. R., 337; McClellan's O. S., 482.

³ 5 W. R., 42.

⁴ Lee to Jackson, 18 W. R., 917. In this discussion we are proceeding on the supposition that Lee had about 80,000 men, and McClellan about 90,000.

in front of Petersburg two or three days before General Lee could possibly have assembled his army for its defence; and at this time Petersburg was comparatively undefended.¹ The fall of Petersburg would unquestionably have worked a vast change in the situation of the contending forces; it is in fact doubtful whether Richmond could have been long held by the Confederates after the capture of Petersburg by the Federals. At Petersburg the army could have been easily supplied by water transportation. The place was perfectly salubrious, even in summer, and the troops could have remained there with entire comfort until sufficiently reinforced to undertake further operations.

This plan, however, possessed no attractions for General Halleck. He refused to give to it any consideration at all. He never seems to have realized that the presence of the Army of the Potomac on the James River rendered Washington secure by compelling Lee to retain the bulk of the Confederate army near Richmond.² Still less did he perceive the immense advantage which the control of the James River by the Federal fleet gave to the invading force. He persisted on withdrawing McClellan from the Peninsula; and it was not until two years had elapsed, and many bloody battles had been fought, and many long marches had been made, that the soldiers of the Army of the Potomac saw again the waters of the James.

While General Pope was in Washington, waiting

¹ 27 W. R., 1018.

² Lee to Jackson, 18 W. R., 916, 917; 16 W. R., 176.

for General Halleck to arrive, he occupied himself, as we have seen, in giving the necessary orders for the withdrawal of the troops in the Shenandoah Valley to the east side of the mountains. He encountered, as was to have been expected, various delays, and found some of his subordinates more anxious than he thought there was any justification for lest the Confederates should make another raid down the Valley.¹ Whether he was impelled by these experiences, or was moved simply by his own views of his relations to his new command, we do not know, but he issued to his army on the 14th of July one of the most extraordinary addresses of which we have any record in military history.² "Let us," said he, "understand each other. I have come to you from the West, where we have always seen the backs of our enemies; from an army whose business it has been to seek the adversary, and to beat him when he was found; whose policy has been attack and not defence. In but one instance has the enemy been able to place our Western armies in a defensive attitude. I presume that I have been called here to pursue the same system, and to lead you against the enemy." And there was much more of the same sort.

Nothing could have been in worse taste than this address. The comparison between the courage and achievements of the Western armies and those of his present command, made by him, a Western officer, was exceedingly irritating to his troops. Nothing that he could have done could so effectually

¹ 18 W. R., 462, 464, 466; also, 483, 485.

² *Ib.*, 473.

have destroyed the possibility of establishing himself in the confidence and respect of his army as this most ill-judged and unwarrantable address. Especially was its tone uncalled for when we consider the *rôle* which Pope was obliged, at that time, at any rate, to play. For, although he might deem it desirable to make a demonstration on Gordonsville, or elsewhere, he was not, as one would gather from his address to his soldiers, about to move on Richmond at the head of an invading force, but, on the contrary, he had every reason to expect that he might be obliged to contest the advance towards Washington of the Army of Northern Virginia, so soon as that army should be set free by the removal of the Army of the Potomac from the neighborhood of Richmond.¹ That this was his actual military situation he would seem, indeed, for the moment, to have forgotten.

On the return of General Halleck from the Peninsula, General Pope left Washington for the front, arriving near Sperryville on the afternoon of the 1st of August.² He at once began to concentrate his army with the intention of moving in force in the direction of Gordonsville and Charlottesville. He had been told by Halleck that it had been decided to withdraw McClellan's army from the Peninsula³ and to send it to Fredericksburg by way of Aquia Creek, and this movement in the direction of Gordonsville may have been, in part at least, intended to induce Lee to send troops there from Richmond, so that McClellan's withdrawal would

¹ 16 W. R., 23.² 18 W. R., 524.³ 16 W. R., 23.

be more likely to be unmolested. Still it does seem from General Pope's letters and despatches that he really expected to occupy Gordonsville. He gave orders that the Orange and Alexandria railroad should be put in running order as far as Culpeper¹ (a town some ten miles beyond the crossing of the Rappahannock), which he had caused to be occupied by a brigade of Banks's corps. As soon as the railroad should be completed to that point, he proposed advancing his whole army to the line of the Rapidan, and he wrote on August 3d to Halleck that, unless the force in his front should be heavily reinforced from Richmond, he expected to be "in possession of Gordonsville and Charlottesville within ten days."² On the 4th he ordered McDowell with Ricketts's division to advance from Warrenton to Culpeper.³ On the 5th he ordered Banks to move from Sperryville towards Culpeper.⁴ His intention at this time was to form his whole army behind Robertson's River, a small stream which flows from the west into the Rapidan at the point where the railroad crosses the latter river, about twelve miles south of Culpeper. Sigel's corps was to form the right of the line; Banks's the centre; and McDowell's the left. Then a considerable force of the three armies was to be sent to Stanardsville, a town some fifteen miles southwest of Robertson's River, which should threaten Gordonsville from the west and compel its evacuation. General Pope was a sanguine man, and on August 5th he wrote to General Hal-

¹ 18 W. R., 520.

² *Ib.*, 527.

³ *Ib.* 530.

⁴ *Ib.*, 535-537.

leck that, "with the large force of cavalry at" his "disposition," he could "easily make the position of Gordonsville untenable."¹

This scheme came to nothing. It seems, in fact, to have been given up almost as soon as it was made. Banks's orders appear to have been changed; he arrived at Culpeper, but not until the evening of the 8th.² McDowell, with Ricketts's division, arrived on the 6th. But it was not until the 8th that Sigel was ordered to march from Sperryville to Culpeper. And this order to Sigel was given, not with a view to a forward movement, but because Bayard, commanding the cavalry, which were at the front, reported on the 7th³ that the enemy were driving in his pickets.⁴ If the plan had any chance of success at all, a prompt concentration of the army was certainly the first thing to be accomplished, and General Pope did not take the steps to secure this prerequisite condition. We mention this episode thus fully because it throws such a clear light on General Pope's methods. We shall see again and again, as we follow the incidents of this campaign, the same ill-digested plans, the same neglect in securing their execution, the same sanguine view of the future, followed as suddenly by the same unexpected change for the worse in the military situation.

General Pope at this time took steps to unite King's division of McDowell's corps to his army. As soon as Halleck had determined to withdraw the

¹ 18 W. R., 535, 536.

² *Ib.*, 548.

³ *Ib.*, 544.

⁴ *Ib.*, 547. It may be added that General Pope's Report makes no allusion to this plan of seizing Gordonsville. 16 W. R., 24, 25.

Army of the Potomac from the Peninsula he ordered Burnside to proceed from Fort Monroe to Aquia Creek with his entire command.¹ Burnside arrived at Aquia Creek on the 4th, and on the 5th his troops were at Falmouth.² Pope, however, deferred writing to King till the 8th, and then ordered him not to move until a certain expeditionary force which he had ordered King to send out in the direction of Hanover Junction³ should have returned.⁴ By a later despatch sent on the same day, however, King was informed that the presence of the enemy had been recognized, and he was ordered to proceed at once to Culpeper.⁵ He arrived there on the evening of the 11th.⁶

It was indeed quite time that Pope's army should be concentrated, for the Confederate force under Jackson had recently been augmented by the addition of over 10,000 men under A. P. Hill, raising Jackson's force to 24,000 men.⁷ These troops were sent by Lee on learning that Pope was advancing towards the Rapidan, and threatening Gordonsville with his entire force.⁸ Jackson kept himself informed as to Pope's movements. He knew that his troops were not concentrated,—that only a part of his army was at Culpeper,—and “hoping,” as he says in his Report,⁹ “to be able to defeat it before reinforcements should arrive there, Ewell's, Hill's, and Jackson's divisions were moved on the 7th in the direction of the enemy from their respective en-

¹ 18 W. R., 524.

² *Ib.*, 528, 529.

³ *Ib.*, 528.

⁴ *Ib.*, 548.

⁵ *Ib.*, 550.

⁶ 16 W. R., 27.

⁷ Allan, 165.

⁸ *Ib.*, 159.

⁹ 16 W. R., 182.

campments near Gordonsville." It was this force which had driven in the cavalry of Bayard, who, assisted on his right by Buford's brigade, was screening the movements and positions of General Pope's army.

When Jackson's advance reached Cedar (or Slaughter) Mountain, about eight or nine miles from Culpeper, about noon of August 9th, it encountered the cavalry of Bayard and the whole of Banks's corps, which Pope had ordered forward to support the cavalry. McDowell, with Ricketts's division, was about half-way between Banks and Culpeper. Sigel's corps had not yet arrived at Culpeper, its commander having delayed obeying the order to march there from Sperryville until he should get particular information as to his route,—a most singular proceeding, considering that there was but one road which he could take. Pope, therefore, had only about two thirds of his army with him, and prudence should have dictated a careful handling of these inferior forces in presence of such an adversary as Jackson.

There has always been a conflict of evidence as to the orders which Pope gave to Banks. Pope claims in his Report ¹ that he ordered him to take up a strong position at or near the point occupied by Crawford's brigade, which had been already sent to the front to support the cavalry. Banks claims that the verbal orders given to him were reduced to writing at his request by the staff-officer who brought them, and that they contained nothing about taking up a posi-

¹ 16 W. R., 25, 26.

tion, but instructed him to deploy his skirmishers if the enemy advanced, and to attack him immediately if he approached; and that he was to expect reinforcements from Culpeper.¹ There can be no sort of question that Pope was to blame for not giving Banks explicit written orders; in fact, we may go farther; it was for the commanding general to go to the front himself and select a position for the army, if one was to be selected to the south of Culpeper. Such a task as this can rarely, if ever, be delegated. Nor was there any reason why General Pope should not have ridden to the front, obtained his information at first hand as to the enemy's strength and movements, and then issued his orders on the spot.

What happened was what might have been expected under the circumstances of a man whose chief qualification for high military rank was personal gallantry. Banks advanced to a point some eight miles south of Culpeper, placed his batteries on a ridge, took up a sufficiently good position, and after several hours spent in comparatively useless cannonading, on seeing the enemy's infantry deploying, he advanced suddenly upon them, and for a brief period gained decidedly the advantage. But he had no reserves; he had neglected to send word to Pope or McDowell or Ricketts of what he was doing; and when Jackson's entire forces came upon the field, the feeble corps of Banks was utterly overwhelmed and driven back with great loss.²

¹ Ropes, 20; 2 M. H. S. M., 405; 3 C. W., (1865, Miscellaneous), 45-47; Allan, 170, n. 3. The whole subject is fully and ably treated by General G. L. Andrews in 2 M. H. S. M., 389-442.

² For an excellent account of this battle, see 2 M. H. S. M., 389 *et seq.*

Such, in brief, was the battle of Cedar Mountain. Banks took into action about 6800 infantry and 1200 cavalry,—8000 in all.¹ Jackson had about 20,000 men on the ground.² Banks lost upwards of 1600 killed and wounded, and nearly 600 missing,³ the greater part of whom were undoubtedly killed or wounded. The Confederate loss was nearly 1300.⁴

Both armies remained for two days in face of each other. Jackson was well aware that if he advanced he would have to deal with fresh troops, probably superior in force to his own. It was no part of his plan to fight a battle unless the chances were in his favor,⁵ or unless he was placed in a position from which he was compelled to extricate himself by fighting, which was not the case here. He knew that as soon as McClellan's withdrawal from the Peninsula should be ascertained beyond a question, he would be joined by General Lee at the head of his whole army. Hence, after having struck his successful blow, he wisely retired across the Rapidan towards Gordonsville.⁶

Pope, however, after two days spent in resting his troops, determined, on the arrival of King's division from Fredericksburg on the night of the 11th, to take the offensive, and he did accordingly advance to the Rapidan. He says in his Report that his "whole effective force was barely equal to that of the enemy."⁷ In this he was entirely mistaken; Jack-

¹ 2 M. H. S. M., 417.

² *Ib.*, 207.

³ 16 W. R., 139.

⁴ *Ib.*, 180.

⁵ Lee to Jackson, 18 W. R., 922, 923.

⁶ Allan, 178.

⁷ 16 W. R., 27, 28.

son had hardly 23,000 men,¹ while the three corps of Sigel, McDowell, and Banks, and the cavalry of Bayard and Buford could not have numbered much less than 40,000 men. A battle might well have resulted favorably for Pope. But if he really thought that he was going to encounter an equal force, he certainly ought not to have offered battle. For his *rôle* was to cover Washington until McClellan should arrive with the Army of the Potomac, and at this time McClellan had not even begun to withdraw his troops from the Peninsula. When, therefore, General Pope says (as he does in his Report²) that he had determined to fall upon Jackson, and to "compel him to fight a battle, which must have been entirely decisive for one army or the other," he shows that he utterly misconceived the part which had been assigned to him. Had he suffered, beyond the Rappahannock, an "entirely decisive" defeat, there is no telling how serious might have been the consequences to the cause of the Union. And it must be remembered that there was not the slightest need of his fighting any battle at all at that time. Pope, moreover, had just been warned by Halleck³ (on August 8th) not to expose his army to any disaster until more troops could be brought up. But Pope was an impulsive and sanguine man, and if Jackson had stood, he would no doubt have attacked him, even if he had believed Jackson's army to be equal in strength to his own, oblivious of Halleck's orders,

¹ Allan, 177, n. 5 ; Pope, however, thought that Jackson was being reinforced by Longstreet ; 18 W. R., 561.

² 16 W. R., 28.

³ 18 W. R., 547.

and regardless of the obvious impolicy and danger of such a course.

On the 15th¹ of August Pope's force was increased by twelve regiments from Burnside's command, numbering some 8000 men,² under General Reno.³ Pope had now under him not less than 45,000 men, exclusive of cavalry.⁴ But this force could hardly with propriety be called an army.⁵ It was rather an aggregation of corps and divisions, which had never been previously united, had no experiences in common, and knew as little of their commander and cared as little for him as he cared for and knew them. This heterogeneous body was now to be attacked by a real army, composed of bodies of troops which had for months been acting together or in concert, under the command of the most accomplished soldier of the day, General Robert Edward Lee. This army had already under his leadership achieved marked success. It was eager for an offensive campaign, enthusiastically devoted to its commander, and confident of being able to drive the Northern invaders from the soil of Virginia. The chances of victory were unquestionably in its favor, if it was to be allowed a fair chance at Pope's army; but it was Pope's duty, and that of his superior officer, General Halleck, to see to it that this chance should not be given, and that Pope's command should be gradually but steadily retired without risking a serious en-

¹ 16 W. R., 545.

² Allan, 177.

³ 18 W. R., 566, 569.

⁴ *Id.*, 603; Allan, 178, 212, n.; 2 M. H. S. M., 202.

⁵ 2 M. H. S. M., 218.

gement until it should be united with the Army of the Potomac. But to this task neither Halleck nor Pope, as we shall soon see, was equal.

General Lee had carefully watched the doings of General McClellan on the James River, and when the latter officer moved out (as he did once or twice) to Malvern Hill, or took up and fortified a position on the south side of the James, Lee had wondered whether any move of importance was to follow.¹ Of late, however, the preparations for the departure of the Federal forces were too plain to be mistaken; and then, without hesitation, Lee determined to carry his army to the Rapidan, where, uniting with Jackson and A. P. Hill, he could press Pope vigorously in the hope of forcing him to a battle and gaining a decisive victory over him before he could be reinforced by McClellan's army or any large part of it.²

Accordingly, on the 13th of August, Longstreet, with ten brigades, and Hood, with two, were ordered to proceed to Gordonsville.³ Stuart's cavalry and Anderson's division speedily followed and joined Lee, raising his force to about 54,000 men⁴; and finally nearly all the rest of the troops composing the Army of Northern Virginia were ordered to the front.⁵ Only two brigades remained for the defence of Richmond. "Confidence in you," wrote President Davis to General Lee, "overcomes the

¹ 18 W. R., 916, 917, 923, 925.

³ 18 W. R., 928.

² Allan, 181, 182.

⁴ Allan, 199, n.

⁵ 18 W. R., 929, 930, 932. They did not, however, reach the army of General Lee till September 2d. Allan, 324.

view which would otherwise be taken of the exposed condition of Richmond.”¹

While this concentration of his enemy's forces was being effected, General Pope remained on the Rapidan River. His letters show that his mind went through its customary succession of changes of opinion. Having, while near Cedar Mountain, believed that Longstreet was reinforcing Jackson,² he was naturally elated at the retirement of the latter officer across the Rapidan, which showed him that he had been mistaken; and when informed by Halleck that he would soon receive reinforcements from Burnside's command,³ he actually wrote that he should move forward on Louisa Court-House as soon as they arrived.⁴ As Louisa Court-House is not only south of the Rapidan but is about fifteen miles southeast of Gordonsville, Halleck must indeed have been surprised. He telegraphed at once to Pope forbidding him to cross the river⁵; and told him it would be far better if he were behind the Rappahannock.⁶ Pope, however, though admitting to General Halleck that a force coming from Richmond might interpose between him and Fredericksburg, which place was still held by Burnside,⁷ still, as late as the 17th, considered his “position strong,” and that it would be “very difficult” to drive him from it.⁸ The next day, however, this sense of security had disappeared; Pope, by a fortunate accident, came into possession of Lee's orders to his lieutenants⁹;

¹ 18 W. R., 945.

⁴ *Ib.*, 565.

⁷ *Ib.*, 575.

² *Ib.*, 561.

⁵ *Ib.*, 569.

⁸ *Ib.*, 589.

³ *Ib.*, 565.

⁶ *Ib.*, 576.

⁹ 16 W. R., 29, 58, 726; Allan, 183.

he saw the imminent danger in which he was placed of being cut off, not only from Fredericksburg, which was a matter in reality of no consequence to him, but from Manassas Junction, his base of operations; and he immediately withdrew his army to the Rappahannock.¹

This retreat was made not a day too soon. Pope's army had been in truth in an extremely dangerous position. Not only was it, as General Halleck had repeatedly pointed out to him,² too far to the front,—not only was Pope's remaining on the Rapidan in contravention of his plain duty of taking every precaution to secure his army against any possible disaster, and, therefore, to avoid a general engagement until he should be joined by the troops of the Army of the Potomac,—but the position itself was radically a bad one. Pope's line of communication was the Orange and Alexandria railroad. In his position on the Rapidan, his line of battle, facing south, lay athwart the line of the railroad as it runs nearly south from Culpeper to the Rapidan, and so far was all right. But at Culpeper the railroad turns at nearly a right angle and runs some eleven or twelve miles nearly east to the Rappahannock River, which it crosses at Rappahannock Station. It was therefore perfectly possible for General Lee, by crossing the Rapidan to the eastward of Pope's position, to reach Rappahannock Station almost, if not quite, as soon as Pope himself could do, and without necessarily encountering any opposition from Pope's army. With Lee in possession of Rappahannock

¹ 18 W. R., 591, 603.

² *Ib.*, 569, 576, 590.

Station, and the railroad bridge destroyed, Pope's army would indeed be in a dangerous situation. All this is very plain, but apparently it was not seen by General Pope until the capture of one of the officers of Stuart's staff put him in possession of Lee's orders to his army.

Lee was greatly disappointed at Pope's escape. He had at first been apprehensive that Pope would be discreet enough to present no tempting opportunity either to Jackson or to himself. He thought that Pope's proper line of defence was behind Bull Run,¹ and not on the Rappahannock, still less on the Rapidan. But the battle of Cedar Mountain had shown him, not only that Pope had ventured beyond the Rappahannock, but that his management of his army was so faulty that he might be expected on occasions to expose himself to attack under the most unfavorable circumstances. Hence, when he saw him quietly occupying the line of the Rapidan, Lee at once saw his opportunity. He ordered Longstreet and Jackson to cross the river by Raccoon and Somerville Fords and move on Culpeper, while the cavalry of Stuart, crossing farther to the eastward at Morton's Ford, were to make for Rappahannock Station, destroy the bridge there, and then, turning to the left, form on the right of Longstreet's corps. Pope would have been attacked in flank and rear, and his communications severed into the bargain. Doubtless he would have made a strenuous fight, but he could hardly have escaped defeat, and defeat under such circumstances might well

¹ Lee to Jackson, July 23d; 18 W. R., 916.

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have been ruin. From this disaster fortune had saved Pope through the capture of Stuart's staff-officer.

When General Lee arrived on the Rappahannock, he found the river very low, and offering no obstacle of any consequence to the movements of an army.¹ He decided on making an attempt to turn Pope's right, and Jackson accordingly ascended the river, and crossed some of his troops near a place called Sulphur Springs. But fortune again showed herself unfriendly to the Confederates. A great rain-storm came on; the river rose, and not only was Jackson unable to throw any large number of his troops across, but he was unable to withdraw those who had crossed,—chiefly a brigade under Early,—which was obliged to remain on the left bank of the river, isolated from its associates, for two days.² In face of these baffling obstacles, Lee was inclined to despair of accomplishing his main object, that of defeating Pope unsupported. The "heavy rain," he wrote to Mr. Davis on August 23d,³ "will no doubt continue the high water and give the enemy ample time to reinforce General Pope with McClellan's army, if desired." Still, there was a gain (so General Lee thought) in changing the theatre of war from the James to the Rappahannock. The Confederate army would "be able," he continued, "to consume provisions and forage now being used in supporting the enemy. This will be some advantage, and prevent so great a draft upon other

¹ Pope to Halleck, 18 W. R., 601.

² 16 W. R., 642.

³ 18 W. R., 941.

parts of the country." But Lee, as we shall soon see, did not stay long in this acquiescent frame of mind.

When General Pope retired to the Rappahannock River, he knew that he must thenceforth remain on the defensive. All thought of an aggressive campaign was abandoned. His only object now was to comply with General Halleck's injunction to hold the line of the Rappahannock and keep open his communications with Fredericksburg. But this was no easy matter, in face of an adversary who was absolutely free in his movements. Pope was obliged to guard Kelly's Ford and to keep up a connection with Burnside at Falmouth, and at the same time to provide against his enemy crossing at Sulphur Springs and marching on Warrenton, thus turning his right,¹ a movement which General Lee would successfully have made had it not been for the sudden rise in the river, of which we have just spoken. Such a movement would beyond a doubt have necessitated a battle, in which the chances would have been in favor of the Confederate commander, whose force, though smaller, was much better organized, and would doubtless have been more concentrated. Yet General Halleck, for no reason that we can discover, except that he was unwilling to give up the Government property at Falmouth and Aquia Creek, or to allow the Orange and Alexandria railroad to be broken up, insisted on Pope's running this wholly unnecessary risk. On the 18th of August he telegraphs to Pope to "stand firm on the line" of the

¹ 16 W. R., 58, 59.

Rappahannock, and "fight hard." On the 21st he says: "Dispute every inch of ground, and fight like the devil till we can reinforce you. Forty-eight hours more, and we can make you strong enough. Don't yield an inch if you can help it."¹ The military capacity of Halleck can be estimated by these orders. He insists, in spite of Pope's evident dissatisfaction,² on the army remaining for several days in this exposed position, liable to be outflanked and attacked by the whole of Lee's army, in order that Pope may receive on the Rappahannock River³ the reinforcements which he can just as well meet, without incurring any risk at all, on the Orange and Alexandria railroad, if he is allowed to retire on Manassas. And this Halleck does when a large part of the troops which he is proposing to send out to Pope have not yet arrived from the Peninsula. It would be hard indeed to match such absolutely indefensible strategy as this. Halleck had it in his power, by ordering all the troops from the Peninsula to disembark at Alexandria, and also directing Pope to fall back towards Manassas, and, if necessary, across Bull Run, without hazarding a battle, to unite the army of Pope with that of McClellan without incurring the slightest risk or loss. But, instead of this, we find him insisting, without any sound military reasons, that the place of junction should be on the Rappahannock River, thus exposing the army of Pope to attack before the army of McClellan had

¹ 16 W. R., 56, 57.

² *Ib.*, 58, 59, 65, 66; Pope's Report, *ib.*, 32, 33.

³ 18 W. R., 645-648, 659.

joined it, and imperilling unnecessarily the success of the campaign.¹

After five days spent in vainly endeavoring to turn Pope's right flank and thus bring on a battle near the Rappahannock, General Lee determined to send Jackson with his command and a part of the cavalry under Stuart,—some 24,000 men in all,—by a circuitous route, crossing the Bull Run mountains at Thoroughfare Gap, to strike the railroad in Pope's rear. While this movement was in progress, Lee, with the balance of his army, consisting of about 25,000 to 30,000 men, proposed to confront Pope's army on the river until that officer should abandon his position, which it was expected he would do as soon as the true character of Jackson's march should become known to him; and then, as soon as the Federal army should retire, Lee intended to follow Jackson and reunite the two fractions of his army.

The object of this novel and perilous operation, which for a time not only separated Jackson's corps of 24,000 men from the rest of the Confederate forces, but also exposed it, while separated, to being overwhelmed by the whole Federal army, remains to be stated. Pope's army, which, on August 15th, consisted of about 45,000 men (exclusive of cavalry) had recently been increased by the arrival of Reynolds's (formerly McCall's) division of the Pennsylvania Reserves² and of the corps of Heintzelman and Porter from the Army of the Potomac, so that, after

¹ In fact, Halleck actually expected that Pope would fight a battle on the 23d of August. 18 W. R., 633, 634.

² This division was about 8000 strong; 18 W. R., 600, 611, 615.

making allowance for the casualties which must have attended the skirmishing on the Rappahannock and for other losses, it numbered upwards of 70,000 men.¹ The disparity between this force and that of Jackson is so enormous, that it is impossible not to be amazed at the audacity of the Confederate general in thus risking an encounter in which the very existence of Jackson's command would be imperilled, and to ask what was the object which General Lee considered as warranting such an extremely dangerous manœuvre. The answer is not an easy one. Lee himself has said nothing in justification of his course. We are, however, told, that for Lee to "send a part of his army entirely around Pope and plant it on the railroad by which McClellan's troops were approaching" "would be sure to spread confusion and dismay," "would disconcert and paralyze Pope's reinforcements, which were coming forward with no expectation of having to force open a road by which to join him," "would compel Pope to let go the line of the Rappahannock and devote himself to protecting his supplies and reopening his communications"; that "he might be forced to fight at a disadvantage in doing this"; that "so unexpected a movement would afford opportunities of striking Pope a damaging blow before his army could be rendered too formidable for attack by the arrival of all the troops that were *en route* to join it."² And this is assuredly all that can be advanced in explanation of General Lee's course. But it is plain from what

¹ *Ante*, 253; Allan, 212, n.

² Allan, 200. Cf. 2 Henderson, 153, 163, 187.

has been said above, that to oblige Pope to abandon the line of the Rappahannock and retire nearer his base was simply to oblige him to make a move in the right direction¹; and it will be conceded, we suppose, that the destruction of supplies intended for his army could not be an important matter in itself, and would only have the effect of accelerating such a move.² There remains the suggestion that the effect of Jackson's blow at Pope's communications would be to expose Pope's army to being attacked at a disadvantage, and also to disconcert and check attempts to forward to him the remaining troops from the Army of the Potomac. We shall consider these points in due time, only remarking here that this move of General Lee's in dividing his army was an illustration of the daring, not to say hazardous, policy which he pursued in this summer of 1862.

On the morning of the 25th Jackson started from Jefferson, and, marching at first somewhat to the northwest to Amissville, and then nearly north, reached Salem at night. The next day (the 26th) he pursued his march through Thoroughfare Gap and Gainesville to Bristoe Station on the Orange and Alexandria railroad, which place he reached about sunset. A force of infantry under General Trimble, accompanied by Stuart with a part of his cavalry, attacked and carried that evening the United States post at Manassas Junction, capturing a large quantity of commissary and quartermaster's stores, besides several hundred prisoners.³

The task which Lee and Jackson had undertaken

¹ Allan, 231.

² *Id.*, 231.

³ 16 W. R., 643.

had been accomplished easily enough. Jackson had encountered no enemy in his march; the railroad had been seized without opposition; the resistance at the Junction had been quickly overcome, and a large amount of supplies had been captured. Jackson had now to consider what he would do next, for there was nothing to prevent Pope from falling back towards Manassas and re-establishing his communications, and in that case Jackson would very probably have to fight against heavy odds.

The first part only of Jackson's march had been observed by Pope and his officers, and their observations led them to a completely erroneous conclusion. On the morning of the 25th they saw Jackson's column proceeding in a northerly direction,¹ and Pope thought it must be bound for the Shenandoah Valley by way of Front Royal.² In this opinion he was sustained by Banks.³ No efficient attempt was made to follow Jackson's command and ascertain the truth, and no one seems to have suspected that Jackson's object was to break up the railroad in Pope's rear and destroy the depot of supplies at Manassas. Pope, in fact, believed that the rest of Lee's army would soon follow Jackson "to the west and northwest."⁴ Nor was this an unreasonable supposition, considering that Jackson could not move on Manassas without putting it in the power of Pope to interpose between him and Lee's main body. Pope no doubt thought that it was improbable that Lee and Jackson would run such a risk as this for any object

¹ 18 W. R., 654, 655.

² *Ib.*, 653, 665.

³ 16 W. R., 67.

⁴ *Ib.*, 67.

then attainable. Still, the omission to send a force of cavalry to ascertain the facts cannot be justified. We may in truth go further than this. Pope knew that there was a possibility that his line of communications might be broken. Stuart, on the 22d and 23d, had attempted, though unsuccessfully, to destroy the bridge over Cedar Run at Catlett's Station¹; and the attempt might be made again with a larger force. It was true that Pope had reason to suppose that large bodies of troops were on their way to join him.² But he had no definite information as to their whereabouts; their commanders had not reported to him. He was necessarily confined to expectations, which perhaps he had a right to consider well-founded expectations; but when it is possible that the communications of an army of 70,000 men, operating in a country from which they cannot obtain supplies, may be broken, expectations are not sufficient,—the commanding general ought not to rely on anything short of definite information. Pope should have fallen back beyond Thoroughfare Gap as soon as he saw Jackson with his large command moving towards the road which, passing through Thoroughfare Gap, leads to Bristoe and Manassas. And, as we have repeatedly pointed out, there was no good reason for his exposing his army to any misfortune whatever. The blame for this course must, however, be laid primarily upon Halleck's shoulders.

The news of Jackson's raid on the railroad was brought to General Pope's attention early in the evening of the 26th. At first, Pope thought it must

¹ 16 W. R., 730, 731.

² *Ib.*, 63.

be the work of a small force, but on further information arriving, he perceived the gravity of the situation, and on the morning of the 27th issued orders for the abandonment of the line of the Rappahannock.¹ McDowell, with his own corps and that of Sigel, and the division of Reynolds, was ordered to Gainesville. Heintzelman, with Kearny's division of his corps and the two divisions under Reno, was ordered to Greenwich, in support of the force under McDowell. Porter was directed to push forward, *i. e.*, eastward, from Warrenton Junction, as soon as he should be relieved by Banks, to whom was entrusted the charge of all the trains of the army. Hooker's division was ordered from Warrenton Junction directly towards Manassas, to drive away the enemy, and to reopen the communications with Alexandria. All these movements were suited to the exigency, and General Pope acted with commendable promptness.

McDowell and Heintzelman reached their respective destinations without opposition, but Hooker, between two and three in the afternoon, found Ewell with his division of Jackson's corps holding the line of Broad Run near Bristoe Station, about nine miles west of Manassas Junction, covering the rest of Jackson's troops, who were at the Junction, occupied in appropriating as much as they could of the stores which had been captured the previous evening, and destroying the remainder. Hooker at once attacked; and Ewell, who was under orders to retire if hard pressed, withdrew his forces at dusk

¹ 16 W. R., 34, 70.

across the stream, after a smart action, in which the advantage would seem to have been with the Federal troops. Hooker certainly produced the impression on his opponents that he outnumbered them,¹ which was not the case.²

Naturally enough, General Pope was elated, not merely by the result of this encounter, but by the discovery (as he supposed) of the whereabouts of Jackson's command, which he took to be Manassas Junction. That afternoon he ordered Porter to march at one in the morning from Warrenton Junction to Bristoe Station,³ and, during the evening, he sent a similar order to Kearny,⁴ directing him to march "at the very earliest blush of dawn"; thus concentrating the 3d and 5th corps at Bristoe. Reno, with his own and Stevens's divisions, was directed to march from Greenwich direct to Manassas.⁵ McDowell, whose corps and that of Sigel and also Reynolds's division were supposed to be at Gainesville,⁶ was ordered to march from that place at daylight to Manassas Junction, resting his right on the Manassas Gap railroad, and "throwing" his "left well to the east,"⁷ that is, so that his front line should be at right angles to the railroad. McDowell's command would in this way sweep the country to the eastward of the railroad, and Pope undoubtedly expected that some part of his troops would come in contact with some part of Jackson's, if the latter retreated in a northerly direction. If,

¹ 16 W. R., 644, 709.

² Allan, 219, n. 6.

³ 16 W. R., 71.

⁴ *Ib.*, 72.

⁵ 18 W. R., 704.

⁶ 16 W. R., 70.

⁷ *Ib.*, 72.

however, Jackson remained at Manassas, as Pope thought more probable, these orders would bring almost the whole Federal army upon him in the course of the forenoon of the next day.

General Pope, however, took no account of the probability that Lee, with Longstreet's corps and the rest of his army, would immediately follow Jackson's march and endeavor to unite with him as soon as possible; but McDowell, recognizing the importance of delaying the junction of the two bodies of the Confederate army, took the responsibility of detaching the division of Ricketts to Thoroughfare Gap, there to take position.¹ This action was not, however, approved by General Pope.²

It may also be questioned whether it would not have been more prudent if General Pope had deferred sending orders to McDowell to march from Gainesville on Manassas Junction until he had ascertained whether Jackson still remained there. A few scouts sent from Pope's headquarters at Bristoe Station to the Junction could have returned by five or six o'clock in the morning, and would have brought back the information that Jackson was no longer there.

For that able officer had no idea of "planting himself on the railroad"³ on which McClellan's troops might be expected to arrive, and thereby exposing himself to be attacked at once in front and rear. He had clearly seen the probability of Pope's army collecting at Manassas, and he had no intention

¹ 16 W. R., 336.

² *Ib.*, 37, 38.

³ *Ante*, 262.

of fighting that army unsupported by the rest of the Confederate forces. During the night of the 27th one of his divisions, Taliaferro's, moved north by way of the Sudley Springs road, and, crossing the Warrenton turnpike, encamped on the morning of the 28th near the old battle-field of Bull Run.¹ Ewell's division left the Junction at dawn, crossed the stream at Blackburn's Ford, and, on reaching the Warrenton turnpike, turned to the left, crossed Bull Run again at the Stone Bridge, and joined Taliaferro's command.² Hill also, at 1 A.M., crossed Bull Run and proceeded to Centreville,³ from which place he the next morning marched west on the turnpike until he had joined the other divisions.⁴ Jackson thus succeeded on the 27th in destroying the Federal dépôt at Manassas, without interruption other than that made by an attempt at the recapture of the place by a brigade of the 6th corps (Franklin's), under General Taylor, assisted by two regiments of Cox's Kanawha division under Colonel Scammon, which was repelled without difficulty,⁵ and also in concentrating on the morning of the 28th all his divisions on the north side of the Warrenton turnpike, where they could hope to welcome General Lee at the head of the rest of the army, so soon as he should emerge from Thoroughfare Gap. No one could have displayed sounder judgment or acted with greater promptness.

¹ 16 W. R., 656.

² *Ib.*, 710.

³ This route was probably selected mainly to avoid Hill's march interfering with those of the other divisions.

⁴ 16 W. R., 670.

⁵ *Ib.*, 405-410, 537, 539-543, 643, 644.

Yet, although up to this point Jackson had eluded his foes, an incident happened that morning which, if properly improved by them, would probably have secured his defeat. One of his brigadiers, General Bradley T. Johnson, on seeing McDowell's column marching down towards Manassas, opened fire upon it.¹ The fire was promptly returned, and Johnson's troops were withdrawn. McDowell, who supposed it was a reconnoitring party, made the mistake of not stopping to ascertain the truth.² Had he done so, he would at once have attacked Jackson with the force under his command, and have sent word to Pope to come to his assistance with the 3d and 5th corps and the two divisions under Reno. It is hardly possible that Jackson could have maintained himself against such superior forces. But the significance of Johnson's skirmish was not recognized at the moment, and the opportunity of engaging Jackson on the 28th with nearly³ his whole army slipped away, unnoticed, from General Pope.

It is plain that on this day it was not the Federal but the Confederate forces who were exposed "to fight at a disadvantage,"⁴ and that it was Jackson and not Pope who was in great peril. It may also be said that Jackson himself showed an astonishing lack of caution in disclosing his position twenty-four hours before he could hope to be joined by Lee and Longstreet. One would have supposed that his *rôle*

¹ 16 W. R., 336, 664.

² Sigel claims (*ib.*, 265) that he correctly apprehended the situation. See McDowell's statement, 15 W. R., 314; also Meade's opinion, *ib.*, 199.

³ Ricketts was at Thoroughfare Gap, and Banks was with the trains.

⁴ *Ante*, 262.

on this day would be to escape observation entirely, —to lie, as it were, *perdu*.¹

General Pope did not move from his bivouac this morning of the 28th “at the earliest blush of dawn” or “at daylight,” but procrastinated his own movements so long that it was about noon² when he reached Manassas with the 3d corps and the two divisions under Reno. He found the place utterly deserted, and could find out nothing as to the enemy’s movements. At first, he thought that Jackson must have retreated in a northerly direction, and he considered the desirability of sending McDowell to Gum Spring, a place some fifteen miles off, to intercept him.³ But, later in the day, reports that Hill had been at Centreville, and that Confederate cavalry had been raiding between Bull Run and Alexandria, came to his ears, and, at 4.15 P.M., he ordered all his troops to Centreville.⁴ Sigel, who was not far from Manassas,⁵ and Reynolds, moved north towards the Warrenton turnpike, but did not cross Bull Run; portions of the 3d corps⁶ and Reno’s division,⁷ however, marched to Centreville at once, and encamped there for the night. Pope himself bivouacked near Bull Run, at or near Manassas Junction.⁸

It was reserved for King’s division of McDowell’s corps⁹ to ascertain the position of Jackson’s com-

¹ 16 W. R., 644.

³ *Ib.*, 74.

² *Ib.*, 37.

⁴ *Ib.*, 360, 361.

⁵ He had, by mistake, marched on the south side of the Manassas Gap railroad. 16 W. R., 265, 336; see 15 W. R., 145, 147, 180.

⁶ 16 W. R., 430, 433, 434.

⁷ *Ib.*, 14; but not Stevens’s division, 545.

⁸ 18 W. R., 720.

⁹ Ricketts’s division, it will be remembered, was at Thoroughfare Gap; *ante*, 268.

mand. This division, as soon as it was known that Manassas had been evacuated, had fallen back to the Warrenton turnpike; and, on receiving Pope's last order, McDowell directed King to march eastward on the turnpike to Centreville. Leaving him to conduct this movement, McDowell rode off to see Pope and have a conference with him.¹ King pursued his march,—Hatch's brigade in advance, then Gibbon's, then Doubleday's, and then Patrick's,²—when, about 5.30 P.M.,³ a heavy artillery fire was opened from the north upon Gibbon's and Doubleday's brigades. These troops halted, and were immediately attacked by the divisions of Ewell and Taliaferro of Jackson's corps under Jackson's direction.⁴ The action was kept up for an hour and a half, until it was dark, with great obstinacy, and the losses were very severe on both sides. No advantage was gained by either party.⁵ Gibbon lost over a third of his brigade⁶; Doubleday nearly one half of those of his troops who were engaged.⁷ Generals Ewell and Taliaferro were both severely wounded, and the Confederate loss was very heavy. Neither Hatch's nor Patrick's brigade took any part in this battle; the attack of the Confederates was a complete surprise to the Federal generals, and, owing to the length of the column, or

¹ 16 W. R., 337.

² *Ib.*, 381.

³ *Ib.*, 369.

⁴ *Ib.*, 645. For Jackson's motives in making this attack, see Allan, 231, 232; 2 Henderson, 179, 235.

⁵ Jackson, in his Report (16 W. R., 645), dwells on the fact that the Federal troops moved off in the night; but this was merely for purposes of concentration, as we shall soon see.

⁶ 16 W. R., 378.

⁷ *Ib.*, 369.

the advanced hour of the day, or to other causes, the whole Federal strength was not brought out.

The news of this action was at once sent to General Pope, and though he did not correctly divine the attitude of the Confederate general, he felt confident that he could, by a prompt concentration, surround and overwhelm him. In his view, Jackson was in the act of retreating to Thoroughfare Gap when he encountered King's troops; in this conjecture he was mistaken; but, inasmuch as King's division was actually confronting Jackson on the west, it seemed to be possible, by promptly uniting the scattered divisions, to hope for a decisive victory over him. He therefore at once issued orders¹ for the assembling of his troops on the Warrenton turnpike; and each order stated that McDowell had intercepted the retreat of Jackson.²

We must now go back to General Lee. That officer, calculating that the news of Jackson's irruption on the Federal communications would compel Pope to retire from the line of the Rappahannock, marched off with all of Longstreet's corps except one division, on the afternoon of the 26th, by the same route as that pursued by Jackson. On the 27th the

¹ Although Pope passed the night of the 28th at Manassas Junction (18 W. R., 720), he does not appear to have known that Hooker bivouacked on the south side of Bull Run (16 W. R., 412) and could easily and quickly have joined Sigel by marching up the Sudley Springs road; Pope's order to Heintzelman implied that Hooker was to go first to Centreville, and thence by the Warrenton turnpike to the field of battle (*ib.*, 75), and this wholly unnecessary *détour* was actually made (*ib.*, 438, 444). Porter, also, who was still at Bristoe Station, instead of being ordered to march by the same Sudley Springs road, was ordered to proceed first to Centreville (*ib.*, 75).

² 16 W. R., 74, 75.

column, although delayed an hour or more by a dash of Buford's (Federal) cavalry into Salem, reached White Plains at night; and at three o'clock on the next day the head of the column reached Thoroughfare Gap.¹ Here, or rather at the eastern end of the Gap,² resistance was encountered from Ricketts's division, which McDowell had wisely sent to the Gap to postpone as long as possible the union of the two portions of the Confederate army. But Lee, by sending a force through Hopewell Gap, a few miles to the north of Thoroughfare Gap, rendered Ricketts's position untenable; and at nightfall he retired to Gainesville.

A short march would now have united Ricketts's division with that of King. Connecting with King on the right was the division of Reynolds; on his right was the corps of Sigel. These forces were surely enough to hold their own until Pope could reinforce them by the 3d corps and Reno's divisions from Centreville and the 5th corps from Bristoe. When morning should dawn, proper positions could be selected, and the attack on Jackson could be begun. Nothing surely could be gained, and much might be lost, by any of the troops then on the ground leaving their posts.

Nevertheless, King, in spite of the advice of that excellent soldier, General Reynolds, who did not leave him until after 9 P.M., and who promised him assistance in the early morning,³ decided, after consulting his brigadiers, to retreat to Manassas at 1 A.M.

¹ 16 W. R., 564.

² *Ib.*, 384.

³ *Ib.*, 393; 15 W. R., 208, 213, 214.

of the 29th, and sent word to Ricketts to that effect.¹ This naturally induced Ricketts to adopt a similar course, and he, that night, retired from Gainesville to Bristoe. It was a most unfortunate thing for his corps that McDowell's should have been absent from it at this moment; but he spent the evening in trying to find Pope, and, to his great regret, was unable to rejoin his command until the next day.²

The morning of the 29th,³ therefore, found the Union army very badly dislocated, so to speak; its parts were widely separated from each other. Sigel's corps and Reynolds's division were the only troops in close proximity to Jackson; they were at or near Groveton. Banks's corps, Porter's corps, and Ricketts's division of McDowell's corps were at Bristoe Station; King's division of McDowell's corps was at Manassas Junction, as was also Hooker's division of Heintzelman's corps; the other division of Heintzelman's corps (Kearny's) and Reno's two divisions were at or near Centreville. It was hardly possible to concentrate all these bodies for a battle on this day of the 29th. On the other hand there was absolutely nothing to hinder Longstreet marching through Gainesville and uniting with Jackson. It must be also remembered that the Federal troops were much exhausted by the long and often useless

¹ 16 W. R., 384. Pope heard of King's retreat to Manassas at daylight; *ib.*, 38.

² *Id.*, 337. For his opinion of the course taken by King and Ricketts, see Stine, 137, 138, where he is quoted as severely condemning it. But see Gibbon's statement, 16 W. R., 380. For thus leaving his corps, McDowell was censured by a Court of Inquiry; 15 W. R., 330, 331.

³ See Map VIII., facing page 300.

marches which they had been making, and that the capture of the stores at Manassas, and the fact that the trains under the charge of General Banks were so far in the rear, caused a great deficiency in food and forage. It was certainly a fair question, whether it would not have been wise to order the whole army to retire behind Bull Run, for rest and refreshment. No losses either of men or material, of any account, had been thus far suffered; it only needed a day or two to put everything on a perfectly satisfactory footing; and in or near Washington were the 2d and 6th corps of the Army of the Potomac, under Sumner and Franklin, ready to be added to the Army of Virginia.

At the same time, notwithstanding all these facts, it was probably possible to inflict a severe blow on the corps of Jackson before it could be joined by that of Longstreet¹; but to effect this, it was necessary that General Pope should have a clear idea in his mind of what he proposed to do, and that no time should be lost by mistakes or delays, or by changes of purpose on his part.

Although all Pope's orders contained his customary injunction to start "at dawn of day,"² either the fatigue of the troops, or the time occupied in making the long *détours* prescribed in the orders, caused so much delay that most of the precious hours of the morning were lost. The troops from Centreville,—those of Kearny, Hooker, and Reno,—had not all arrived on the field by twelve o'clock.³ It took

¹ Cf. 2 Henderson, 187, 188.

² 16 W. R., 75.

³ *Ib.*, 412.

Pope until noon, therefore, to concentrate the right wing of his army.

The orders to the officers commanding the detachments of the left wing were anything but clear and precise, with the exception of the instructions sent to Banks, who was directed to send his trains to Manassas Junction and Centreville.¹ Porter, who was at first ordered to Centreville,² was subsequently told to take with him King's division of McDowell's corps, and to proceed promptly in the opposite direction, towards Gainesville, with the intention, perhaps, of preventing Jackson's retreat through that town, or of attacking him there.³ Porter had passed the Junction on his way to Centreville when he received this second order. His column at once faced about, and proceeded towards Gainesville through the Junction, where, towards 11 A.M., he was joined by McDowell. But, about noon, Porter received a third order, addressed to McDowell as well as to himself, known in the controversy which subsequently sprang up as to Porter's conduct, as the "Joint Order." ⁴

In this paper McDowell and Porter are informed that Heintzelman, Sigel, and Reno "are moving on the Warrenton turnpike, and must now be not far from Gainesville," and they themselves are told to move forward also with their joint commands towards Gainesville. "I desire," continued General Pope, "that as soon as communication is established between" the forces of Heintzelman, Sigel, and Reno

¹ 16 W. R., 76.

² *Ib.*, 75, 518.

³ *Ib.*, 518.

⁴ *Ib.*, 76, 520.

“and your own, the whole command shall halt. It may be necessary to fall back behind Bull Run, at Centreville, to-night. I presume it will be so, on account of our supplies.” These sentences indicate that Pope, who wrote from Centreville, and had not taken the trouble to go to the front and ascertain the facts from Sigel and Reynolds, still supposed that Jackson, now that King had moved away from him, was retreating to Gainesville and the Gap. It is also tolerably clear from his language that Pope does not think that there will be a battle, but that he wishes the two wings of his army to advance towards Gainesville until they have established communication with each other.¹ Pope furthermore says: “If any considerable advantages are to be gained by departing from this order, it will not be strictly carried out.” Then he recurs to the caution given in the first part of the order: “One thing,” he says, “must be had in view, that the troops must occupy a position from which they can reach Bull Run to-night or by morning.”² These expressions show that at this time he expected to fall back to Centreville at the close of the day. And it is at Centreville, evidently, where he expects to combat Lee’s reunited army, for he adds: “The indications are that the whole force of the enemy,”—*i. e.*, Lee’s main army,—“is moving in this direction at a pace that will bring them here [Centreville] by to-morrow night or the next day.” He closes by saying that his

¹ 18 W. R., 958.

² See a similar order from Pope to Heintzelman, Reno, and Sigel: “The command must return to this place [Centreville] to-night or by morning, on account of subsistence and forage.” 18 W. R., 958.

own headquarters will be for the present with Heintzelman's corps or at Centreville. That the commanding general might be as far distant from the scene of any possible collision with Jackson's forces as Centreville, indicated plainly his opinion that no battle was likely to occur on that day of the 29th.

It is plain from this order that General Pope believed that Jackson had retreated, and that it would not do to follow him even as far as Gainesville, for the army must be brought back at night to Centreville to obtain needed supplies. It is also plain that he believed that if, contrary to his expectation, Jackson should be found in position, the Union troops would have to deal only with Jackson, and not with Jackson and the rest of Lee's army. This is established by his fixing "to-morrow night or the next day"—*i.e.*, the day after to-morrow—as the date of Lee's reaching Centreville.

It did not take the two generals long to discover that the situation was wholly different from that indicated by the terms of the Joint Order. The head of Porter's column in its march towards Gainesville reached a little stream called Dawkins's Branch about half-past eleven o'clock. Here the enemy was perceived. This was about three miles and a half from Gainesville. Porter at once deployed one brigade (Butterfield's) of his leading division (Morell's). McDowell showed him a despatch¹ which he had just received from General Buford, who commanded the Union cavalry on the right, informing him that seventeen regiments, one battery, and

¹ 18 W. R., 730 ; see, also, 729.

500 cavalry had passed through Gainesville about 8.45 A.M. It was evident from the clouds of dust in the direction of Gainesville that large bodies of troops were still arriving. It was, in fact, Lee's main army under Longstreet, which, having left Thoroughfare Gap early in the morning, was now passing through Gainesville, and deploying on Jackson's right, in front of the position taken by Morell's division of Porter's corps.¹

After some consultation the two generals decided that it was not possible to carry out the directions contained in the Joint Order, and that it was desirable to avail themselves of the latitude given them to vary from it; and as McDowell's divisions, being in rear of Porter's, were near the Sudley Springs road, which ran from the Junction to Groveton, McDowell determined to take King's division with him up the road towards Pope's main army, leaving Ricketts, who was painfully making his way from Bristoe Station to the Junction, to follow as fast as his wearied men could march. Porter was to remain where he was. It is likely that there was an understanding that King, when he should arrive at a suitable place, should halt and deploy his division, making connections with Morell on his left and with Reynolds or Sigel on his right; but this is not certain.² King then marched away towards the field of Groveton, from which sounds of artillery firing could now plainly be heard.³ He was followed by Ricketts.

¹ 16 W. R., 519.

² Cf. Ropes, 97, 98; Allan, 255, 256; 2 M. H. S. M., 371-381.

³ See the Report of the Board of Officers, 16 W. R., 513-535.

Porter was thus left isolated,—without supports or connections. He had only from 9000 to 10,000 men. His plain task was simply to observe the enemy in his front, and from time to time to make such movements as would prevent the troops there—*i. e.*, Longstreet's command—from assisting their friends—*i. e.*, Jackson's troops—who were fighting Pope north of the turnpike. This task he fully performed. He was confronted by the division of D. R. Jones, of Longstreet's corps, which was supported during the afternoon by that of Wilcox¹; and by thus occupying the attention of these troops he was doing all that it was possible for him to do,—small as his force was and absolutely without any supports. Moreover the terms of the Joint Order must have convinced him that General Pope had no intention whatever of engaging the united commands of Lee and Jackson with an army so much in need of supplies, and so far from being in order of battle.

And there is no reason to suppose that Porter was not right in the opinion which he attributed to General Pope. But Pope did not know that Longstreet and Lee had arrived; he still thought that he was opposed by Jackson only. The troops which Sigel and Reynolds encountered in the early morning belonged to Jackson's command, and so did those which Heintzelman and Reno attacked in the afternoon. Pope knew of no other Confederate troops on the field than these. Hence Porter's inaction was attributed by him to unworthy motives; and when at the close of the afternoon a positive written order²

¹ 16 W. R., 565.

² *Ib.*, 525.

to Porter to attack the enemy's,—that is, Jackson's,—right flank, produced no corresponding movement on the part of Porter, Pope considered his conduct incapable of explanation.¹ He did not know that if Porter advanced at all, it could only be to attack the troops of Longstreet directly in his front, who were covering that right flank of Jackson's line which Pope erroneously supposed to be “in the air” and to lie exposed to Porter's attack.² Such, however, was the case; it was plain to Porter that the commanding general had issued the order in complete ignorance of the facts. It may be remarked that the non-participation of Longstreet's troops in the battle which Pope was fighting on this day of the 29th, was undoubtedly due to their being confronted, and, so to speak, “contained,” by Porter's corps.

Pope, therefore, in the absence of McDowell, Porter, and Banks, had only the corps of Sigel and Heintzelman, the two divisions of Reno, and the division of Reynolds wherewith to fight his battle north of the Warrenton turnpike,—say, 35,000 men at the outside,—and his force was not all on the field until about twelve o'clock. It took, naturally, some time

¹ Pope's Report, 16 W. R., 40.

² Pope made such charges against Porter in his Report (16 W. R., 40), that the latter applied for a Court Martial, which sentenced him to be cashiered. President Lincoln approved the findings of the Court on January 21, 1863. But in 1878, Porter succeeded in obtaining a new hearing of his case before a Board of Officers, who had access to much testimony, in great part that of the Confederate reports, not in evidence in the Court Martial, and they unanimously and completely exonerated him, and he was restored to the army. 16 W. R., 505-536. The proceedings of the Court Martial are contained in 17 W. R.

for the troops from Centreville to take position and to make the necessary connections with the troops of Sigel and Reynolds. These last had left their bivouacs early in the morning, had crossed the Warrenton turnpike, and had vigorously pushed the enemy to ascertain his exact position,¹ with a view to further active operations as soon as the expected reinforcements should arrive from Centreville and Manassas. There was much artillery firing, but little or no musketry firing, during the forenoon, and in fact it was not till two o'clock P.M. that the action became serious. Jackson had fallen back to the westward, and had established his men "along and in the vicinity of the cut of an unfinished railroad,"² which ran from Sudley Springs in a southwesterly direction towards Gainesville. Here, in the afternoon, he was assailed, but in disconnected and ill-combined movements, by the comparatively fresh troops of Heintzelman and Reno. Portions of the divisions of Hooker, Kearny, Reno, and Stevens, well-disciplined troops and most bravely led, again and again assaulted, but in a desultory way, portions of Jackson's line. A magnificent charge led by Grover, a brigadier in Hooker's division, came near achieving a great success.³ It failed from lack of proper support. The fighting in the latter part of the afternoon was on the whole very severe, and at times it seemed as if the issue was doubtful.⁴ The vulner-

¹ 16 W. R., 266, 393, 645, 680.

² *Ib.* 645.

³ *Ib.*, 413, 438, 441, 680, 681.

⁴ *Ib.*, 671.

able place in Jackson's line was his extreme left, which Pope might have turned early in the afternoon, when Heintzelman and Reno came up. But he made no attempt to do this. Jackson's troops were in good positions, so far as front attacks were concerned, and they were troops of the best quality. They had every confidence in their leader, and they held their posts with the greatest tenacity and resolution.¹ At dusk, King's division of McDowell's corps arrived, and, under General Hatch,² took part in the action, but, after a brief, but very sharp contest, the Union troops were forced to retire with the loss of a gun,³ which, however, was left on the ground between the lines.⁴ Hatch was driven back by a part of Hood's division of Longstreet's corps. The Federal attacks had everywhere been repulsed, and the battle was over.

General Pope seems at last to have become aware that a part at least⁵ of the command of Longstreet had now joined Jackson, for, in his despatch to Halleck, dated at five o'clock A.M. of the 30th, he claims to have defeated the day before "the *combined* forces of the enemy."⁶ At any rate, he was, not long after this, distinctly informed by Porter, who early arrived on the field from Manassas, as well as by Reynolds and Buford,⁷ that Longstreet had been in position on Jackson's right, south of the turnpike, on the day before, and was at that time getting in readiness to turn the left of the Union

¹ 16 W. R., 646.

⁴ *Ib.*, 565.

² General King had been taken ill.

⁵ *Cf.* Allan, 269, n. 3.

³ 16 W. R., 623.

⁶ 18 W. R., 741.

⁷ Letter to the writer from General Porter.

army. McLean¹ also, whose brigade was on the extreme left on the night of the 29th, reported to Pope that he had observed the enemy in force south of the turnpike the afternoon before. Pope's estimate of Lee's entire army was, it must be remembered, that it was a force "immensely superior" to his own.² Under this belief it was surely his true policy to take up a strong position for defence, and await supplies and reinforcements. Two corps of the Army of the Potomac, those of Sumner and Franklin, had not yet joined him. Only the day before, he had written to McDowell and Porter,³ and also to Heintzelman, Reno, and Sigel,⁴ that the army would probably have to fall back behind Bull Run to obtain supplies.⁵ In fact, had it not been for the effect on the troops of retreating after a battle, it would probably have been best to retire to Centreville. But if this was (as it seems to us it was) unadvisable,⁶ it would be beyond question a direct departure from the part which had been assigned to General Pope in this campaign in Virginia for him to attack the "combined" forces of the enemy before he had effected a junction with the two corps of Sumner and Franklin. Had he achieved

¹ Letter to the writer from General McLean.

² 16 W. R., 47.

³ *Id.*, 76. Cf. Pope's Report, *ib.*, 41.

⁴ 18 W. R., 958.

⁵ There were, however, plenty of supplies in the railroad cars near Bristoe Station; and although the cars could not have been brought to Manassas Junction, owing to the destruction of the bridge at Bristoe, yet there were plenty of wagons there which might easily have been loaded with supplies and reached the army during the 30th. 1 *Pers. Recoll.*, N. Y., 45.

⁶ But see Allan, 266, and Swinton, 187.

on the 29th any success of importance,—attained any position which gave him a decided advantage,—the case would have been different. But nothing of the sort had happened. Although he had everywhere pressed the enemy hard, he had failed to find a weak place in their lines. And it is not unlikely that he would have contented himself with taking up a strong position and awaiting the movements of the enemy had not a report that the Confederates were retreating been unluckily brought to his attention.

On the morning of August 30th it was found by General Pope's skirmishers that the Confederates had fallen back from the advanced positions which they had occupied at nightfall the day before in following up the repulsed Union troops to the vicinity of their lines.¹ A personal reconnoissance of the ground made by Generals McDowell and Heintzelman inclined those officers to think that Jackson's forces were retiring towards Gainesville.² Such was also General Pope's opinion.³ He issued at noon an order for the vigorous pursuit of the enemy.⁴ McDowell was "assigned to the command of the pursuit," in which his own corps, the division of Reynolds, and the corps of Porter were to be employed.

General Pope's account of the matter in his Report is, however, a very different one. He says⁵: "It was necessary for me to act thus promptly and make an attack, as I had not the time, for want of provisions

¹ 16 W. R., 557, 565; Allan, 265.

² *Ib.*, 340, 413. This was also the opinion of General Sigel.

³ *Ib.*, 41; 413.

⁴ *Ib.*, 361; 18 W. R., 741.

⁵ *Ib.*, 42.

and forage, to await an attack from the enemy, nor did I think it good policy to do so under the circumstances. During the whole night of the 29th and the morning of the 30th the advance of the main army under Lee was arriving on the field to reinforce Jackson, so that by twelve or one o'clock in the day we were confronted by forces greatly superior to our own, and these forces were being every moment largely increased by fresh arrivals of the enemy from the direction of Thoroughfare Gap. Every moment of delay increased the odds against us, and I therefore advanced to the attack as rapidly as I was able to bring my forces into action." Here Pope represents himself, not as pursuing on this afternoon a retreating foe, but as attacking one whose force, already superior, was being constantly augmented, and whose attack, for that reason, he did not "think it good policy" to await. We confess ourselves unable to follow this argument. If Pope supposed that the enemy's forces were at noon "greatly superior" to his own and were hourly increasing in numbers, it was the height of imprudence to attack them, unless they were occupying some untenable position, or were making some capital blunder, neither of which it was pretended was the case. And the imprudence was aggravated by the fact that a delay of twenty-four hours would add two fine corps to his army. We, however, find it impossible not to believe that the order issued at noon to press the enemy vigorously in pursuit indicates a wholly different view of the situation from that which General Pope subsequently thought he

recollected entertaining. There can be little doubt, that, at the time, Pope thought the enemy were retreating, and that he could pursue them.

In this view, Pope was completely mistaken. So far from wishing to avoid a conflict, "the thing above all others that Lee wanted was a battle, before any further additions from McClellan's army could join Pope."¹ Whether Lee would have attacked Pope in position may perhaps be doubted,² although Longstreet was during the morning of the day of the battle moving to a position from which to assault the Federal left.³ But the Federal commander gave his adversary just the opportunity he needed. Unwilling to believe that Porter was correct in his belief that Longstreet had joined Jackson the day before, Pope was full of the idea that the latter, whom he believed to be in the act of retreating from the field, could be routed by the fresh troops which could now be put in against him, and he utterly disbelieved the reports which were early brought to him of Longstreet's assembling his forces south of the turnpike with the intention of attacking the left of the Union army.

Accordingly General Pope massed nearly his entire army north of the Warrenton turnpike. He gave McDowell the general charge of the pursuit, and instructed him⁴ that Porter's corps should advance on the turnpike and be followed by the division of Hatch⁵ of McDowell's own corps, and by that

¹ Allan, 309.

² See 2 Henderson, 206.

³ 16 W. R., 394, 565, 579.

⁴ *Ib.*, 340, 361.

⁵ Sometimes called King's division.

of Reynolds,—the Pennsylvania Reserves, so called, which had been of late under McDowell's command. The other division of McDowell's corps—that of Ricketts,—followed by Heintzelman's corps, consisting of the divisions of Hooker and Kearny, was to take the road which runs from Sudley Springs to Haymarket (a town about half-way between Thoroughfare Gap and Gainesville), nearly parallel to the Warrenton turnpike and about a mile and a half to two miles north of it. The whole plan was based on the belief that the Confederates were retiring; it was not a plan of an offensive battle against an enemy in position.¹

In carrying out this programme, Reynolds's division was at first formed on the south side of the turnpike near the Henry House; it marched westwardly, partly on the turnpike and partly over the fields south of it; and his batteries opened fire on the enemy on the ridge in front of Groveton.² His skirmishers advanced through the woods on the south side of the turnpike. When Reynolds had got as far as Groveton, he had encountered so much resistance that he was "convinced that the enemy were not in retreat, but were posted in force on the left flank" of the Union army. On being informed of this, McDowell ordered Reynolds to take his division to Bald Hill³ to resist the threatened attack, and promised him other troops to sustain him.⁴ The order was immediately carried out. This with-

¹ Cf. Sykes's Report, *ib.*, 483.

² 16 W. R., 394, 398.

³ The Chinn house stood on this hill.

⁴ *ib.*, 340, 341, 394.

drawal of Reynolds's division to Bald Hill, however, exposed the left of Porter's corps, near which, south of the turnpike, Hazlett's battery was posted.¹ But Warren, of Sykes's division, at once moved his brigade to the support of the battery, which continued to do efficient service.²

On the other (right) flank of the Federal army, Ricketts, who was leading the way, followed by the two divisions of Heintzelman's corps, speedily became convinced that the enemy in his front were in their old lines, and had no intention of retiring, and he was soon directed by McDowell to resume his first position.³ Immediately afterwards, he was ordered to send two of his brigades with two batteries under General Tower to the south of the turnpike to the Henry House Hill, to meet the threatened attack on the left of the Union army.⁴ At the same time Sigel was directed to send one brigade to Bald Hill, and thither McLean's brigade immediately repaired.⁵

Meantime Porter was making his preparations. He saw plainly enough that the task before him was not that of pursuing a retreating foe, but of assaulting a strong force, well posted. He had unfortunately lost for the day one brigade (Griffin's) of his first division, and also another brigade (Piatt's, then under Sturgis), which had recently been attached to his command, for these brigades had marched to Centreville with the division-commander, Morell,

¹ Allan, 286, n. 3.

² 16 W. R., 469, 470, 482, 503.

³ *Ib.*, 384.

⁴ *Ib.*, 341.

⁵ *Ib.*, 286.

under the impression that the rest of the corps, to which these divisions acted, under Morell, as a rear-guard, had fallen back to Centreville, instead of having marched on the Sudley Springs road towards Groveton.¹ Hence Porter's leading division, now under Butterfield, consisted only of two brigades,—those of Roberts and Weeks. His second division under Sykes contained three brigades, that of Warren—which was now posted south of the turnpike,—and those of Buchanan and Chapman, composed of regular troops.² Porter had modified the original instructions given to Hatch, and had ordered him to form on his right and make the attack simultaneously with him.³

The corps of Sigel and Reno's two divisions were held in reserve.

General Lee's army was arrayed in two lines, which made an obtuse angle a little north of a point on the Warrenton turnpike about half or three quarters of a mile west of Groveton. His left consisted of Jackson's corps, which still occupied the line of the unfinished railroad. This, as it approached the turnpike from the north, kept off to the westward, showing open ground half a mile wide in its front, that is, towards the Federal position. On every favorable spot Jackson had planted batteries, and on the heights between Jackson's right and the turnpike Longstreet had placed a considerable part of his artillery under Colonel S. D. Lee,⁴ in a position which completely commanded the wide sweep

¹ 17 W. R., 970, 989, 985, 1100.

² 16 W. R., 260.

³ *Ib.*, 368.

⁴ *Ib.*, 548, 577.

of vacant land which separated the line held by Jackson at the southerly end of the railroad-bed from the belt of woods from which Porter must make his attack. The rest of Longstreet's troops occupied the roads and adjacent woods lying to the south and southeast of the turnpike; and his right division—that of D. R. Jones—was making its way along the old stage-road, which ran parallel to the turnpike and about a mile south of it, towards Bald Hill and the Henry House Hill, with the intention of attacking the left flank of the Federal army.¹

Notwithstanding that the information obtained by Reynolds that the Confederates were in force on the south side of the turnpike had been promptly communicated by that officer to Pope² as well as to McDowell,³ and Pope had approved of McDowell's action in withdrawing Reynolds's division from Porter's column of attack, and in sending it, as well as a brigade of Sigel's corps, to take position on Bald Hill, south of the turnpike; notwithstanding, also, that McDowell,—undoubtedly with Pope's sanction and approval,—had ordered⁴ two brigades and two batteries from Ricketts's division to the Henry House Hill, to augment the forces which he deemed required to render the left of the army secure—,Pope made no change in his orders to Porter. That officer therefore, continued to make his arrangements to deliver the blow which he was expected to deliver against the enemy's left centre, although his sup-

¹ Allan, 272.

² Letter from General Ruggles.

³ 16 W. R., 340. This was about 2 P.M.; 18 W. R., 964.

⁴ 16 W. R., 341.

ports on the right and left were being withdrawn to meet an expected attack on the line of communications of the army. It is unnecessary to comment on the reckless tactics employed by General Pope on this day.

Finally, between three and four o'clock,¹ Butterfield's two brigades, together with Hatch's and Patrick's brigades of Hatch's division, having approached as cautiously as possible to the edge of the woods near the Dogan House in which they had been formed, rushed forward with loud cheers, and, in spite of a terrible front and flank fire of artillery, and, when they neared the enemy's position behind the railroad cut, of musketry also, gallantly pushed on until they were not only at close quarters with their antagonists, but in some places came very near breaking their lines. They advanced in three ranks, and doubtless appeared to their foes stronger than they really were. For nearly half an hour they maintained themselves close to the Confederate lines, and the fighting was of the most severe kind.²

But the Confederates were too strong. Longstreet, being asked for reinforcements, simply brought up more guns³ to enfilade the Federal lines, and to sweep the approaches to the railroad cut. Sykes found it impossible to get his troops across the open to the aid of their comrades.⁴ Reynolds on the left and

¹ There is much discrepancy in the accounts as to the hour of this attack.

² 16 W. R., 472, 599, 666; Allan, 280-282. ³ 16 W. R., 565.

⁴ *Ib.*, 577, 599. Pope's statement (*ib.* 42) that "the attack of Porter was neither vigorous nor persistent" is incorrect and unjust. The successful charge of Butterfield could not have been repeated by Sykes. The intervening space could not be crossed after Longstreet and S. D. Lee had got their guns in position.

Ricketts on the right, as we have seen, had already been withdrawn to other parts of the field. There was nothing for the brave fellows of Butterfield's and Hatch's divisions to do but to fall back, which they did, naturally in considerable disorder. Their losses had been very severe, and Hatch himself was badly wounded. The assault had completely failed. It should never have been ordered.

The instant that the repulse of Porter's attack was perceived, General Lee ordered Longstreet forward on the right. But his order had been anticipated by that vigilant officer.¹ The divisions of Hood, Anderson, Wilcox, Kemper, and D. R. Jones rapidly advanced south of the turnpike, assaulting unhesitatingly and fiercely whatever stood in their way.

The first shock fell on Warren's little brigade of not more than a thousand men, which, after a gallant resistance and suffering great loss, was fairly swept off the field by Hood's Texans.²

The defeat of Warren's small command would not, however, of itself have involved serious consequences for the Union army. But Pope, with a lack of sound judgment which is almost unintelligible, had, on witnessing the rout of Butterfield's division, ordered Reynolds to leave his position on Bald Hill, on McLean's left, and to cross the turnpike and the field of battle, "to the rear of Porter, to form a line behind which the troops might be rallied."³ This most

¹ 16 W. R., 557.

² *Ib.*, 503, 609.

³ *Ib.*, 394. The rear brigade, under Anderson, was not able to cross the road before Warren was attacked, and it participated in Warren's battle.

injudicious step left the defence of the important position of Bald Hill solely to McLean's brigade.¹ McLean, attacked at first by the Texans who were following up their success over Warren's brigade, bravely maintained his position²; but finally, on the Confederates pushing large forces round both his flanks, he was forced from the hill after a determined resistance,³ in which Schenck, his division-commander, gallantly participated; nor could all the efforts which were subsequently so bravely made to recover the position by the other troops of Sigel's corps under Schurz, Krzyzanowski, Koltes,⁴ and others, and by the two brigades of Ricketts's division which had been hurried up from the Henry House Hill,⁵ and which Tower so gallantly led,⁶ avail to wrest this important post from the grasp of the Confederate army. Had Reynolds remained on the hill, there can be little doubt that Bald Hill would have been held, until the arrival of these reinforcements, or of a part of them—all that would have been needed—had rendered its capture practically impossible.

While this spirited action was going on, the two regular brigades of Sykes's division of the 5th corps were sent to the Henry House Hill, as were also the two brigades of Reynolds's division, which had so unnecessarily left Bald Hill, and had crossed the field only to find themselves in the midst of the confusion created by the repulse of Butterfield's division, and to see that the troops of Heintzelman's

¹ 16 W. R., 286.

² *Ib.*, 286.

³ *Ib.*, 287.

⁴ *Ib.*, 269, 283, 301.

⁵ *Ib.*, 255, 341, 342, 390-392.

⁶ Tower was severely wounded in this action.

corps, who with those of Stevens, Doubleday, and Gibbon held the Federal centre, did not stand in need of their assistance.¹ To the divisions of Reynolds and Sykes were added Reno's old brigade,² Graham's battery, and such other troops as happened to be at hand. The Confederates under G. T. Anderson, Toombs, Wilcox, and others, made repeated and desperate efforts to carry the position, but after a long and bloody fight they were obliged to renounce the attempt. The fighting was not over till after dark.³ Reno's brigade, with the battery, remained on the Henry House Hill until about 9 P.M.⁴

Meantime Jackson, having so completely repulsed Porter's charge, was pushing his troops, or such of them as had not suffered too severely to be ordered forward,—assisted by some brigades of Longstreet's corps,—against the Federal troops north of the turnpike. These consisted of portions of Sigel's corps, of the divisions of Hooker and Kearny of Heintzelman's corps, the division of Stevens of Reno's corps, and of Hatch's division and of two brigades of Ricketts's division of McDowell's corps.

The peculiar feature of the battle north of the turnpike consists in the fact that the Federal line, which, after the defeat of Butterfield's assault on Jackson's position, was amply strong enough to resist any attacks, was, immediately thereupon, weakened and

¹ 16 W. R., 394, 395.

² The other brigade—the 1st—had suffered so much on the previous day that it was unfit for service. 2 M. H. S. M., 151. Cf. 16 W. R., 341, 342. Cf. 2 M. H. S. M., 143.

³ 16 W. R., 600.

⁴ 2 M. H. S. M., 143; 16 W. R., 420.

confused by being obliged to respond to the demands required by the exposed state of the left flank and communications of the Federal army. Sigel, whose corps was to have been the reserve of the whole army, was obliged to send all or nearly all his troops to take position on Bald Hill, or to join in the fighting which raged in that region. Of Sykes's division, Warren had, prior to Butterfield's attack, been obliged to leave his proper position to occupy, so far as with his weak brigade he could, the post which Reynolds had vacated to march to Bald Hill; and, almost as soon as the two other brigades—those of Buchanan and Chapman—had been joined by the retiring troops of Butterfield, they were ordered off to the Henry House Hill. Ricketts, too, on the right, had been obliged to send away two of his brigades under Tower; and finally Reno with his brigade had been called from his central position in reserve to defend the all-important Henry House Hill.

The advance of Jackson could not, therefore, be resisted as it might otherwise have been. The Federal troops in his front, confounded and bewildered by the spectacle of their supports and reserves marching off to other parts of the field, weakened, not only in numbers, but by the withdrawal of the troops on which they had depended for the defence of their flanks and for reinforcement in combat—their commander also having his attention entirely occupied with the vital necessity of defending the hills south of the turnpike—were in no condition to make an effectual resistance. Possibly some able general in charge of the whole mass of men might

have established a line of battle, and have animated the troops with courage and confidence. But this task was not even attempted by anyone. McDowell had his hands full on the south of the turnpike.¹ Heintzelman says that he was "directed to retire and hold successive positions,"² and this seems to have been the only order given by General Pope affecting the disposition of his troops in this region. The consequences were what might have been expected. No effectual resistance was made to the advance of the Confederates. They were detained, certainly, by the admirable practice of the Federal artillery; but the Federal infantry steadily retired. The Carter House, a mile northeast of the Henry House, was evacuated after dark, though after "a desperate stand."³ This capture terminated the battle on the north side of the turnpike. The Confederates made no further attempt to pursue their retreating foes. Kearny, in fact, remained in the vicinity of this house till 10 P.M.

Thus ended the battle of the Second Bull Run, as it is called in the North,—the Second Manassas, as it is called in the South. Both armies were tired out; both had lost heavily; the Confederate loss was upwards of 7000 for the three days⁴; but the Union forces had suffered by far the most. They had unquestionably been badly beaten. The Con-

¹ 16 W. R., 340.

² *Ib.*, 413.

³ Ricketts's Report, 16 W. R., 385. Cf. Kearny's Report, *Ib.*, 416. The "brown house" which he mentions is the Carter House; Allan, 300, n. 3. It is sometimes called the "Pittsylvania House."

⁴ 16 W. R., 560-562.

federates had captured, according to General Lee's report,¹ 7000 prisoners—many, or probably most of them, wounded—numerous colors, some 30 guns, and 20,000 small arms. The loss in killed must have been some 1500,² and doubtless as many as 3000 or 4000 wounded men made their escape. Parts of the army had suffered very severely; many regiments, some brigades, and some divisions were practically broken up. Crowds of stragglers and demoralized men had left the field for Centreville, creating the erroneous impression that the army was routed.³ For, at the time, when General Pope, between 6 and 8 P.M.,⁴ ordered a retreat from the field, the Confederates had ceased all attacks. No firing was going on, except occasionally a shot from a Federal gun on the Henry House Hill.⁵ There was nothing to prevent the Union army remaining on the ground. No opportunity was lost, or even endangered, by remaining. The retention of the Henry House Hill secured the passage over Bull Run by the Stone Bridge and the neighboring fords; there was, as we say, no need of retreating that night; it was simply a question of what it was best to do—to retire behind the stream, or to sleep on the ground and await supplies and reinforcements in the morning. Parts of the army were in perfectly good condition; several

¹ 16 W. R., 558. Cf. Allan, 306, n. 1: also, 2 M. H. S. M., 211-214.

² 16 W. R., 249-262, where the casualties in the whole campaign are given.

³ 16 *Ib.*, 536.

⁴ The order to retreat was not sent to all the troops until 8 o'clock. 16 W. R., 43, 78. McDowell says he received it about 7 (343), but a staff-officer of his informs the writer that the exact hour was 5.50 P.M.

⁵ 16 W. R., 344.

brigades had not been engaged. The discipline of a large part of the army was unimpaired. Many of the troops who had suffered a good deal would beyond doubt have recovered themselves in a few hours, so far, that is, as organization and discipline were concerned.¹ It was going to be a serious blow to the confidence of the army, and also to the prestige of the commanding general, to retreat after such a hard-fought day. But General Pope was convinced that, considering "the result of the battle," the "very heavy losses his army had suffered, and the complete prostration of his troops from hunger and fatigue," he could not "maintain his position."² In this calculation he failed, as it seems to us, to do justice to the courage and tenacity of his soldiers. Nor did he take due account of the very heavy losses which the Confederates must have sustained, nor of their exhaustion and fatigue. In our judgment, it is unlikely that General Pope's army would have been attacked the next day until sufficient time had elapsed for the two corps of Franklin and Sumner to come up, and until ample opportunity had been given for supplying the needs of the soldiers.³ General Pope did not attach sufficient weight to the fact that Lee would have no reinforcements to counterbalance the veteran troops of Sumner and Franklin, which were, on that evening, as Pope knew, only a few miles away. Banks's corps, of 8000 or 9000 men, was also

¹ Cf. Palfrey, 2, 3.

² 16 W. R., 43.

³ At any rate, we know that on the next day no part of Lee's army except the cavalry of Stuart moved from their lines until afternoon. 16 W. R., 714.

close at hand.¹ Nor did he estimate at its proper value the demoralizing effect which a night march in retreat across a stream traversable only by one bridge and by fords difficult to find in the darkness must have upon some 50,000 weary and hungry men who had been beaten that day, and many of whose organizations had been seriously shaken, not only by defeat but by the loss of many efficient officers.

The truth is, that this retreat on the night after the battle of the 30th of August has given a character of hopeless failure to this whole campaign. Up to the 30th of August General Pope, although assuredly he had achieved no success, and had entirely failed to take advantage of the unique opportunity which the temerity of Lee and Jackson had afforded him of attacking the latter's 25,000 men with double their numbers, had yet sufficiently accomplished the task which he was set to do. He had brought his army to the neighborhood of Washington without suffering any severe losses; he had, in fact, inflicted nearly as much loss as he had suffered; and on the morning of the 30th he had his army well in hand; it was entirely within his power to take up a good position, and to hold it against any assault which Lee with his inferior forces could make. There was no reason why the experience of Malvern Hill might not have been repeated on the plains of Manassas. He made, however, the fatal mistake of utterly misconceiving the situation, and, neglecting all pre-

¹ Why Pope did not make use of this corps, or at least of a part of it, in the battle of the 30th, it is not easy to see. Greene's division was at Manassas Junction by 11 A.M. See Gordon's A. V., 415.

cautions, he ordered an attack. His battle was, therefore, fought under great disadvantages; but it was fought with great obstinacy, and their victory must have cost his opponents dearly. Pope was beaten, and badly beaten; still, he was not forced from the field. He might have remained on the ground that night; and the chances are, as we have said, that before Lee could have organized any attack against him, his army would have more than repaired its losses by reinforcements, and would have received all necessary supplies. But his retreat on that night changed the whole aspect of affairs; it stamped the whole campaign as a failure. It was a confession of his inability to meet his antagonist, and it lost him the remaining confidence of his soldiers. This confidence, never very strong, had from the beginning of the campaign been continually impaired by the contrasts presented between his projects and promises and the unbroken series of failures to obtain tangible and successful results, and this retreat from the field of Bull Run completely exhausted it.

The next morning, August 31st, the Union army took position on the heights of Centreville. The right wing had retreated in good order,¹ but parts of the centre and left—by no means all, however—had got into considerable confusion in retiring over the turnpike and the Stone Bridge. This was, in great part certainly, the natural, not to say unavoidable, result of the fact that the principal avenue of

¹ For instance, Kearny, 16 W. R., 416, 422; Doubleday, 370, 372. Some of these troops fell back over the fields and forded the stream above the Stone Bridge. See Gordon's A. V., 413.

retreat was not adequate for the movement of such a large force. During the day, however, all this disorder was remedied and the men fell into their proper places. The different corps took up suitable positions. Banks¹ joined the army with his corps of nearly 9000 men, having brought all his wagons, full of most welcome supplies, to Fairfax Court House.² Sumner and Franklin, with the 2d and 6th corps—about 10,000 men each—veteran and excellent troops, and well commanded—were also this morning added to Pope's command. But these troops of the Army of the Potomac, as well as those of the 3d and 5th Corps, who had participated in the campaign under Heintzelman and Porter, were very distrustful of General Pope, and their advent did not tend to restore confidence to the army as a whole. In fact, the brief but unfortunate history of the Army of Virginia—for this was the name given to General Pope's forces—shows how different a mere aggregation of troops is from an army, and illustrates the truth that an army is a living organism, and cannot be manufactured at will by the simple process of adding together portions of different armies.³

¹ He had been placed in charge of the trains and supplies. *Ante*, 266.

² He had come up from Bristoe to Fairfax Court House with the wagon trains, having lost nothing. 16 W. R., 45. At Bristoe he had, in obedience to orders, destroyed the supplies there, cars, engines, etc. *Ib.*, 78, 324.

³ "The advantage possessed by an army composed of troops who, for a year, have been organized as an army, who are under a general to whom they are accustomed and in whom they trust, in fighting an army that is a mere collection of three or four independent armies, or parts of armies, drawn together and organized as an army a few weeks only before the first battle of the campaign, placed under the command of a general of whom they know absolutely nothing, and who knows nothing either of the

General Lee, the morning after the battle—Sunday, the 31st—at once despatched Stuart with the cavalry to ascertain the position and movements of the enemy. That active officer was in the saddle before daylight, and soon discovered the Union army on the heights of Centreville.”¹ Deeming it unwise to attack his antagonist in position, General Lee determined to turn the Federal right by the Little River turnpike, which runs from Aldie Gap in a southeasterly direction to Germantown on the Warrenton turnpike, a point some six miles east of Centreville. Accordingly, on Sunday afternoon² Jackson’s corps moved north to Sudley Ford, where Bull Run was crossed. His troops then proceeded to the Little River turnpike, and, turning to the right, marched to Pleasant Valley,³ about four miles northwest of Chantilly, where they bivouacked for

troops or their officers, is simply enormous. It outweighs disparity of numbers, at any rate, to a very great degree. The former army is a military machine, welded together, and a fit instrument of war in the hands of a man who knows what it is and how to use it. The latter is an aggregation of troops, and not an army at all.

“General Pope’s army was ordered to be made up from the independent and widely separated armies of Sigel, Banks, and McDowell, on June 26th. While the concentration was going on, and the organization of the Army of Virginia was being effected, General Pope remained in Washington. He joined his new command on July 29th. The battle of Cedar Mountain was fought on August 9th, only twelve days later. As for the troops from the Army of the Potomac, coming up, as they necessarily did, in detachments, it was obviously out of the question to incorporate them, in any proper sense of the word, with the Army of Virginia; in fact it was not even attempted. In my judgment far too little has been made of these disadvantages under which the Federal commander and his troops labored. They account for a great part of the failure which attended the campaign.”—Note by the writer in 2 M. H. S. M., 217-219.

¹ 16 W. R., 557, 737.

² *Ib.*, 714.

³ *Ib.*, 682.

the night. Longstreet followed Jackson later in the afternoon, but halted for the night on the west side of Bull Run.¹

The next day, September 1st, Jackson, preceded by Stuart's cavalry, resumed his march on the Little River turnpike towards Germantown and Fairfax Court House.² He proceeded slowly, for he did not wish to permit too wide a gap between the rear of his column and the following force of Longstreet.³ He had passed the little town of Chantilly about two miles, and had reached a point near an eminence known as Ox Hill on the easterly side of the road, when he was made aware of the presence of the enemy moving towards him from the Warrenton turnpike. This force consisted of Stevens's division and of Reno's brigade of Reno's division, the whole under command of General Stevens, General Reno, who ranked him, being, for the moment, indisposed.⁴ Stevens, who was a very energetic and gallant officer, had been verbally directed by General Pope soon after 1 P.M.,⁵ "to march at once [from Centreville] across the fields to the Little River turnpike, take a position across it, and hold in check a Confederate force said to be advancing by that road towards Fairfax Court House."⁶

¹ 16 W. R., 566.

² *Ib.*, 647.

³ *Ib.*, 744.

⁴ Reno, however, accompanied the expedition. 2 M. H. S. M., 153.

⁵ In this description of the action at Chantilly, great reliance is placed on the excellent account of it by the late Bvt. Brig. Gen. Charles F. Walcott, in 2 M. H. S. M., 135 *et seq.* The narratives in Gordon's *Army of Virginia* and in Ropes's *Army under Pope* are incorrect.

⁶ 2 M. H. S. M., 150.

General Pope had foreseen early in the morning the possibility of his right being turned by a movement of the enemy down the Little River turnpike, and had as early as 3 A.M.¹ ordered Sumner to send a brigade of infantry—there being actually no cavalry fit for service—to make a reconnoissance in that direction. Before many hours he was informed that the movement of the enemy was actually in progress; at 11 A.M. he telegraphed Halleck to that effect²; at noon he ordered McDowell to march rapidly to Fairfax Court House and occupy Germantown with his whole force³; at 1 P.M. he ordered Hooker to Germantown, to assume command of the troops already there⁴; and soon after this he ordered Stevens to proceed to, and to hold, the Little River turnpike west of Germantown, as we have above narrated.

Stevens, about 4 P.M., reached the neighborhood of the turnpike. He there struck the enemy's skirmishers, and recognized the presence of a large force. A belt of woods lined the turnpike on its westerly side, and the troops which he had struck were from the divisions of Ewell and A. P. Hill. Stevens determined at once to attack. Forming his division, of hardly 2000 men, in three lines, and preceded by a heavy skirmish line, he soon drove the enemy's light troops back to the woods, and pushed his men close to the fences which separated the open from the timbered land. Here he was met with a staggering fire and his men wavered. But Stevens,

¹ 16 W. R., 81; see, also, a subsequent order of 5.45 A.M., *ib.*, 82.

² *ib.*, 84.

³ *ib.*, 84.

⁴ *ib.*, 84.

seizing the colors of the 79th (N.Y.) Highlanders, his own regiment, led the whole force against the enemy. The fences were thrown down and a lodgment was made in the woods. The gallant Stevens fell, shot through the head. The brigades of Branch and Brockenbrough of Hill's division were broken and fell back in disorder. But Hill brought up other troops, and Lawton, who commanded Early's division, put three of his brigades into the fight. On the other hand Reno's brigade soon joined Stevens's division. The fighting was hot, and lasted an hour or more. Hays's Confederate brigade was broken and forced to retire. Finally Kearny came up with his division from Germantown, and, misconceiving the situation—thinking that the troops in the woods were Federal troops—rode right up to the woods and was instantly killed. The fighting gradually languished owing to the increasing darkness, and finally ceased, both sides having lost heavily and neither having gained any ground. The only wonder is that the Union forces, which were greatly outnumbered, were able to make head for so long against their foes. The fight, though a small affair, was very fiercely and obstinately contested. During a good part of the time a severe thunderstorm raged. All the accounts speak of this feature of the action as having greatly intensified the grimness of the scene. Before daylight all the Union troops retired to Germantown and Fairfax Court House.¹

We must return to General Pope. This officer

¹ 2 M. H. S. M., 160.

had, since arriving at Centreville, been losing confidence in the ability of his army to fight a successful battle. In his first account¹ of the battle of Bull Run, written at Centreville, at 9.45 P.M., August 30th, he had stated that the troops were in good heart; and that he had "lost nothing; neither guns nor wagons." The next morning, writing to Halleck,² he suggests that the troops are not to be trusted; "you may rely," he says, "upon our giving them [the enemy] as desperate a fight as I can force our men to stand up to." After this very oracular observation he says: "I should like to know whether you feel secure about Washington, should this army be destroyed." Pope shows here that he has lost confidence in his men. And yet, at this very moment, he had in the three corps of Sumner, Franklin, and Banks nearly 30,000 excellent troops who were perfectly fresh, and had not fired a shot in the recent battles—quite enough to have defeated Jackson on the Little River turnpike, separated as he was from Longstreet. Halleck's reply,³ dated 11 A.M. of the 31st, to the encouraging despatch of the previous evening crossed Pope's discouraging note of the morning, and elicited from the latter a note written in the afternoon, which contained the not very hopeful statement,—“We shall fight to the last.”⁴

The next morning, September 1st, Pope unburdens his mind to Halleck in regard to the officers of the Army of the Potomac.⁵ “Their constant talk,”

¹ 16 W. R., 78.

² *Ib.*, 80.

³ *Ib.*, 79.

⁴ *Ib.*, 81.

⁵ *Ib.*, 82, 83.

he says, "indulged in publicly, and in promiscuous company, is that the Army of the Potomac will not fight—that they are demoralized by withdrawal from the Peninsula, etc." That Pope could write such stuff as this after he had had such troops as the divisions of Hooker, Kearny, and Reynolds under him for weeks, and had witnessed, only a day or two before, the gallant charge of Butterfield's division of Porter's corps and the stout defence of the Henry House Hill by Sykes's division of the same corps, almost passes belief. But the idea that his defeats were due to his being sacrificed by McClellan's officers had got full possession of his mind. In this epistle he practically confesses himself unequal to the task of commanding his army.

He closes his letter with the urgent advice to Halleck to "draw back the army to the intrenchments in front of Washington, and set to work in that secure place to reorganize and rearrange it. You may," he continues, "avoid great disaster by doing so." This was certainly the only logical conclusion from his premises. And such a recommendation as this from the commander of the army General Halleck could do nothing but adopt. Accordingly, the next day, September 2d, he gave the necessary order to Pope,¹ informing him at the same time that McClellan had charge of the disposition of all troops within the defences. Pope, who had already ordered his army to retire from Centreville towards Fairfax Court House,² at once issued his instructions,³ and was able to report to Halleck, at 7.10 P.M.,⁴ that all

¹ 18 W. R., 797.

² 16 W. R., 85.

³ *Ib.*, 86.

⁴ *Ib.*, 87.

the commands would be within the works by morning. The passage of the army trains and the movement of the troops from Centreville to Alexandria was covered by Torbert's brigade of the 6th corps, acting by Franklin's orders under general instructions from McClellan.¹

Thus ended General Pope's campaign in Virginia. It is not necessary that we should say anything in addition to the comments with which we have accompanied the incidents of the campaign, except to call attention again to the fact that neither Halleck nor Pope ever seems to have grasped firmly the nature and limits of the task which Pope's forces in Virginia ought to have striven to accomplish while McClellan's army was being withdrawn from the Peninsula. That task was a simple one—to delay Lee as long as possible, and to refuse to fight him (unless of course some great emergency should arise, or some wonderful opportunity occur) until the two armies of Pope and McClellan should be united. To this task, which was of the first importance, Halleck perversely added another and a wholly inconsistent one, that of preserving the Government property at Fredericksburg and Aquia Creek. Hence he allowed Pope to push out even as far as the Rapidan, where (as we saw ²) he came within an ace of being routed, and was obliged to retreat in haste to the Rappahannock. It is but justice to Pope to say that after he had been forced back, he saw the situation more clearly than did Halleck; and that he would probably have welcomed receiving permis-

¹ 16 W. R., 537.

² *Ante*, 256-258.

sion to retire to Centreville. In regard to Pope's battles—while we may fully justify him in attacking on the 29th—supposing, as he did, that he had only Jackson to deal with—it is plain that he went directly counter to his rôle in attacking the united forces of Lee on the next day,—before Sumner and Franklin had joined him. On the other hand, Halleck's efforts for the preservation of the Government stores and property at Fredericksburg and Aquia Creek resulted in utter failure. Both places were abandoned, and not only were the warehouses burned, but also the bridges on the railroad and the wharves at Aquia Creek. Why these last acts of destruction were committed it is not easy to see; for the wharves and bridges were of no use to the Confederates, and might conceivably have been still in existence when a Union army should next occupy Falmouth and need a railroad running thence to Aquia Creek, as actually happened in the ensuing December. But for one reason or another General Halleck saw fit to have everything burned.¹

General Lee's operations had indeed been successful, but we must point out that his successes were due much more to the ability with which he improved the mistakes of his antagonist, than to any advantages which he procured for himself by the hazardous strategy which he employed. Thus, although he was able to attack Pope's army at a disadvantage² on August 30th,—the only time when he

¹ 18 W. R.. 799, 813-816. General Haupt, the officer in charge of the construction of the United States military railroads, says: "The burning of the wharf, buildings, and bridges, I consider to have been unnecessary and highly censurable."

² *Ante*, 262.

did attack it,—this was not due to any previous movements of his own, but solely to Pope's making the mistake of assaulting Jackson's position that same afternoon under the impression that he was retreating, and of persisting in it after he knew that Lee was preparing to move in force upon his left and communications. Of these mistakes Lee took prompt advantage, and thus won his victory. But the separation of Jackson from the main body of the Confederate army three days before had nothing whatever to do with these mistakes of General Pope's on the field of battle.

Again, it is quite true that the severance of Pope's communications with Washington and Alexandria did cause a great deal of alarm among the officers of the Government there, and did undoubtedly delay the forwarding of the two corps of Sumner and Franklin to the army of General Pope.¹ But General Pope, though he had met with no success, yet had not been beaten in the battle of the 29th; he could perfectly well have taken up a defensive position for the following day; if he had been attacked, he ought to have been able with his superior numbers to maintain himself till reinforced and supplied; and there is no reason to think that he would not have been able to do so. His defeat on the 30th was due obviously to his faulty management on the field; and although there can be no doubt that the assistance of Sumner and Franklin would have been most valuable,—as indeed would that of Banks, whom

¹ *Ante*, 262. See 2 M. H. S. M., 265-334; 18 W. R., 706-750. Ropes, chapter xii.

he did not even summon to his aid,—it is not correct to say that Pope was defeated because he did not have a sufficiently large force under him.

We may well, however, inquire how it came about that General Halleck did not send these corps of Sumner and Franklin and also the corps of Keyes to join the army of General Pope in time for the last battles. The whole object of removing McClellan from the Peninsula being to unite his army to the force under Pope, and General Lee being powerless to prevent the union, it is certainly remarkable that it should not have been accomplished.

In the first place, Halleck actually intended to leave the 4th corps—Keyes's—at Yorktown¹—a most extraordinary thing to do, considering the imperative necessity, as he had represented the matter in his correspondence with McClellan, of uniting the two Union armies, so as to be able to cope with Lee's 200,000 men. It only shows how impossible it was for General Halleck to grasp the main idea of a military operation clearly and firmly, and to prevent other ideas from crowding it out of its place of paramount importance in his mind. There was really nothing which 10,000 veteran soldiers could do at Yorktown, although, if there had been a superabundance of troops, some might very properly have been stationed there. There was every reason in the world why the transfer of the Army of the Potomac to Washington, if once decided on, should have been a complete transfer. But the fates were

¹ This measure was evidently disapproved of by McClellan; 18 W. R., 628, 633. He wanted to have Yorktown and Gloucester held, but by new troops.

too strong for General Halleck. Towards the end of the month, on August 26th and 27th, Halleck, on McClellan's suggestion, decided to replace Couch's division of Keyes's corps with 5000 fresh troops,¹ and Couch was sent for in haste.² And, still later, on September 2d, after Pope's army had retired within the defences of the capital, Halleck was reluctantly compelled to admit that the great danger to Washington rendered it necessary that the remainder of Keyes's corps should be sent from Yorktown to join the rest of the army.³ This attempt to combine the retention of 10,000 veteran troops in the abandoned Peninsula with the all-important matter of securing a sufficient force to meet Lee in front of Washington, thus met with the same fate as Halleck's other attempt to combine with the same all-important matter the preservation of the government stores and wharves at Falmouth and Aquia Creek.

With the corps of Franklin and Sumner, however, the case was, of course, quite different. Franklin's corps arrived at Alexandria on the 24th and 25th of August;⁴ and he, in obedience to orders from McClellan,⁵ who was then at Aquia Creek,⁶ reported in person on the 26th to General Halleck in Washington, and received from him an order directing him to march by Centreville towards Warrenton.⁷ Franklin at once telegraphed to his staff at Alexandria the necessary order for the corps to start the next morning at six o'clock.⁸ After further consul-

¹ 18 W. R., 672, 673, 688, 689.

² *Ib.*, 692, Williams to Sawtelle.

³ *Ib.*, 798.

⁴ *Ib.*, 651.

⁵ *Ib.*, 651.

⁶ 12 W. R., 93.

⁷ 18 W. R., 676.

⁸ *Ib.*, 676.

tation with Franklin, however, in which the fact that Franklin's artillery had not yet arrived was considered, Halleck thought it best that the order for starting should be revoked¹, and Franklin at once telegraphed to his staff-officer from Halleck's office in Washington² to that effect.

Shortly afterwards, before nine p.m. of the 26th,³ the news came of Jackson's having broken at Bristoe Station the communications with Pope's army. This was at first supposed to be the work of a small raiding party, and Halleck, during the night, through the agency of General Haupt, the officer in charge of railroad transportation, ordered Taylor's brigade of Franklin's corps and two regiments from Cox's Kanawha command under Colonel Scammon to proceed to Manassas at once.⁴ At ten the next morning (the 27th), Halleck telegraphed McClellan,⁵ who had arrived at Alexandria the previous evening,⁶ that Franklin ought to go out to Manassas as soon as possible. About the same time a despatch was received from General Burnside,⁷ who was at Falmouth, in which he copied a note written to himself by General Porter, containing the substance of Pope's order to him of seven o'clock the previous evening,⁸ ordering him to the neighborhood of Warrenton, and saying that he (Pope) did not see how

¹ Letter to the writer from General Franklin. General Halleck fails to mention in his letter to the Secretary of War this change of opinion of his; 18 W. R., 739.

² *Ib.*, 676.

³ *Ib.*, 679. Halleck to McClellan, *ib.*, 690; 12 W. R., 95.

⁴ *Ante*, 269.

⁶ 18 W. R., 688.

⁵ 12 W. R., 95.

⁷ *Ib.*, 701.

⁸ *Ib.*, 675. This was written before Pope had heard of Jackson's raid.

a general engagement could be put off more than a day or two. McClellan thereupon very wisely suggested to Halleck¹ the advisability of bringing up Sumner from Aquia, where his corps had landed, to Alexandria, remarking that a defeat at Warrenton "would leave the troops on the lower Rappahannock (Burnside's and Sumner's) in a dangerous position," and that from Alexandria the corps of Franklin and Sumner could move out together to Centreville, where they would cover the capital. He followed this up by suggesting that Burnside should at once evacuate Falmouth and Aquia.² Halleck acceded to McClellan's suggestion that Sumner's corps should be brought up to Alexandria, but, still unwilling to renounce his favorite scheme, deferred coming to a decision as to Burnside's command.³ Halleck, in truth, was by no means devoting sufficient attention to the military crisis in Virginia. He even wrote to McClellan that "more than three quarters of" his time was "taken up with the raising of new troops and matters in the West."⁴ McClellan at once ordered Sumner to re-embark his troops at Aquia and come up to Alexandria with them.⁵

While this correspondence was going on, or soon after, news arrived that the supposed raid was a serious matter—that Manassas and Fairfax Station had fallen into the possession of the enemy.⁶ Taylor's expedition had been completely defeated on the morning of the 27th, and he himself had been

¹ 18 W. R., 689.

² *Ib.*, 689.

³ *Ib.*, 691.

⁴ *Ib.*, 691.

⁵ *Ib.*, 692.

⁶ *Ib.*, 693.

mortally wounded. Confederate troops, both infantry and cavalry, had passed through Centreville on the morning of the 28th. Fitz-Hugh Lee with three regiments of Stuart's cavalry raided the country on the 27th and 28th between Fairfax Court House and Alexandria.¹ For four days (26th, 27th, 28th, 29th) nothing was heard from General Pope.² No one even knew where he was.

McClellan was strongly averse to the movement of Franklin's corps alone, which Halleck had ordered. On the 27th he urged on Halleck's attention³ the fact that Franklin had "no horses except for four guns without caissons," that he (McClellan) could pick up no cavalry, and insisted that without artillery or cavalry Franklin could not effect any useful purpose.⁴ In the same letter he called Halleck's attention to the necessity of "placing the works in front of Washington in an efficient condition of defence."⁵ In a later note he explicitly stated his opinion to be that the true policy was to make the works perfectly safe, and also to mobilize two corps as soon as possible, but not to advance them until they could have their artillery and cavalry.⁶ But General Halleck reverted to his first decision as to the employment of Franklin's corps by itself. At noon of the 27th he told McClellan that it ought to move out by forced marches carrying three or four days' provisions.⁷

¹ 16 W. R., 735.

² *Ib.*, 724.

³ As Franklin himself had done on the 26th. Letter to the writer from General Franklin.

⁴ 18 W. R., 689.

⁶ *Ib.*, 690.

⁵ *Ib.*, 689.

⁷ 12 W. R., 94.

About the same time rumors of the presence of Confederate troops on the north of the Capital¹ alarmed McClellan; and the reports which General Barnard,² who was in charge of the defences of Washington, made to him and to General Halleck in regard to the necessity of taking immediate measures for the security of the city, induced him to change his mind as to the advisability of pushing out both the corps, and to suggest to Halleck that Sumner's corps should be retained for the defence of Washington. Halleck at once concurred in McClellan's opinion,³ and Sumner's corps, which arrived at Alexandria on the 28th, was, on the next day, stationed near the forts on the west side of the city.⁴

This disposition of Sumner's command left Franklin's corps the only body of troops of the Army of the Potomac still under McClellan's control, and the only body available for the reinforcement of General Pope's army. General Halleck adhered to his original intention, that this corps must move out from Washington alone. On the evening of the 27th, Halleck and McClellan had a conference⁵ in which

¹ 18 W. R., 690, 691, 722.

² "A serious attack," said Barnard, "would not encounter a serious resistance. . . . It is my duty to state that without experienced garrisons thrown into the works and experienced troops posted along the lines, the fortifications of Washington are not secure against assault." (*Ib.*, 711, 712.) Halleck's reply to Barnard (712) is characteristic of him. "If you are deficient in anything for the defence of the forts," said he, "make your requisitions on the proper office. General Casey will give you plenty of new troops and General McClellan will assist you with artillerists. I have no time for these details, and don't come to me until you exhaust other resources." But neither Casey nor McClellan were under Barnard's orders. All three were under Halleck's orders only.

³ *Ib.*, 722.

⁴ *Ib.*, 723.

⁵ *Ib.*, 739, 740.

it was determined that Franklin was to move on the next morning.¹ Soon after noon of the 28th Halleck sent Franklin a direct order² to move his corps that day "toward Manassas Junction, to drive the enemy from the railroad." But McClellan would not allow Halleck's order to be carried out. He replied at once³ to the general-in-chief, saying that, as soon as Franklin could "be started with a reasonable amount of artillery," he should go. Halleck replied that not a moment must be lost in pushing as large a force as possible towards Manassas, so as to communicate with Pope before the enemy should be reinforced.⁴ But McClellan was refractory and unwilling to yield. He acknowledged instantly the receipt of the order, but refused to obey it. "Neither Franklin's nor Sumner's corps," said he,⁵ "is now in condition to move and fight a battle. It would be a sacrifice to send them out now." To this Halleck replied⁶: "There must be no further delay in moving Franklin's corps toward Manassas. They [*sic*] must go to-morrow morning, ready or not ready. If we delay too long to get ready there will be no necessity to go at all, for Pope will either be defeated or be victorious without our aid."

That evening Franklin's artillery arrived,⁷ and the next morning he started.⁸ But McClellan, under the

¹ 18 W. R., 707.

² *Ib.*, 707.

³ *Ib.*, 708. No doubt Scammon's experience at the bridge over Bull Run, without artillery (16 W. R., 406), which was known to McClellan (18 W. R., 708), had its influence on his opinion.

⁴ *Ib.*, 709.

⁵ *Ib.*, 709.

⁶ *Ib.*, 710.

⁷ *Ib.*, 709.

⁸ 12 W. R., 97.

plea that it would not be safe for him to advance beyond Annandale—a town only nine miles from Alexandria—ordered him to halt there.¹ When Halleck learned this, he said that it was contrary to his instructions²; but it must be admitted that Halleck's latest order was anything but precise. Instead of telling McClellan that Franklin must reach Manassas or Centreville that night, he had contented himself, in replying to the question which McClellan had asked him in the afternoon—how far he wished Franklin to advance³—with saying that he wanted him “to go far enough to find out something about the enemy. Perhaps,” he said, “he may get such information at Annandale as to prevent his going farther; otherwise, he will push on toward Fairfax.”⁴ Now Franklin did get some news at Annandale, which he sent to McClellan.⁵ Halleck, however, apparently oblivious of the limited scope of Franklin's mission, as defined above, wrote in the evening to McClellan⁶: “That corps must push forward, as I directed, protect the railroad, and open our communications with Manassas,” certainly a much more important and an altogether different task from that of “getting information.”⁷ It is not to be wondered at that McClellan, in reply, said: “Please give distinct orders in reference to Franklin's movements of to-morrow.”⁸ Halleck vouchsafing no reply to this request, McClellan ordered Franklin to march at six

¹ 12 W. R., 99.

² 18 W. R., 723.

³ *Ib.*, 722.

⁷ For Halleck's own account of this matter, see 18 W. R., 739.

⁸ 12 W. R., 99.

⁴ *Ib.*, 722.

⁵ *Ib.*, 723.

⁶ *Ib.*, 723.

the next morning (the 30th) "to place himself in communication with General Pope."¹ Franklin reached the vicinity of Bull Run at six o'clock, just as the battle was over.²

As for Sumner, he was ordered on the 30th to march to the relief of General Pope, leaving a brigade and a battery near Washington.³ He left that afternoon,⁴ and arrived at Centreville the next morning, finding the whole army assembled there.

In reviewing the unsatisfactory story of these few days many criticisms naturally arise, but we shall confine ourselves to a very few.

In the first place, General Halleck's deficiencies as a general-in-chief are everywhere painfully apparent. It is plain that he had no definite policy of his own. The bringing up of Sumner from Aquia and the posting of his corps along the lines of Washington were both suggestions of McClellan. Halleck confessed himself ignorant of the state of the defences of the Capital.⁵ He indeed sent Franklin out at last, and wanted to send him earlier, but his purposes in so doing were very vaguely and somewhat inconsistently defined. Had he seriously intended that Franklin, as soon as he arrived from the Peninsula, should go out to reinforce Pope, he could certainly, one would think, before McClellan arrived at Alexandria, have provided him, out of the stores of the Capital, with all the necessary artillery and transportation. An able and efficient officer in his place would have

¹ 12 W. R., 100.

² 16 W. R., 536, 537.

³ 18 W. R., 745,

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⁴ *Ib.*, 752.

⁵ *Ib.*, 712.

had decided views on all these points; and, armed with the powers of a general-in-chief, would have carried them out.

In the second place, it is very plain that General McClellan's estimate of the danger attending a movement of troops sent out from Washington to reinforce Pope's army was enormously exaggerated, to say the least of it. There was in fact no danger at all after August 27th. But we must remember that the facts were not known at the time to McClellan or to Halleck, or to anyone in Washington. All sorts of rumors were floating in the air; McClellan was honestly anxious about the safety of the city; the fact that Pope, with an army of 70,000 men, had had his communications with the Capital severed was inexplicable and ominous of disaster; and under such circumstances, McClellan did not feel like trying experiments. At one time, on the 27th, he indeed seemed to think that two well-equipped corps might prudently venture out to Pope's assistance¹; two days later he wrote to the President² that either all available forces should be used to open communication with Pope, or that he should be left "to get out of his scrape," while all means should be used to make Washington perfectly safe. It is plain that he was all along doubtful of the expediency of making any serious attempt to reopen communications with Pope, or to reinforce him, and there could hardly be a question as to condemning him for undue caution, were it not for the fact that the two corps of Sumner and Franklin, which constituted all

¹ 18 W. R., 689, 690.

² 12 W. R., 98.

his available resources, were without an adequate force of artillery and cavalry. Yet, considering that a march of twenty-five miles over a road, on which, as we know now, no enemy except Fitz-Hugh Lee's three regiments of cavalry would have been found, would have united these troops to Pope's army in time for the battle of the 30th, it is certainly remarkable that the attempt was not made. We do not believe that General McClellan, as has been so often charged, deliberately withheld these corps from going to Pope's army for fear that with their assistance Pope would gain a victory. Rather was he afraid that these corps would be sacrificed in a futile attempt to enable Pope to withstand Lee's army.¹

The failure of General Pope's operations had been so manifest, and the lack of belief on the part of the troops in his ability as a commander of an army had become so universal, that there was really nothing for the Government to do but to relieve him and to appoint McClellan in his room. McClellan possessed to the full the confidence of the Peninsular army, the officers and men of which believed that his plans had been interfered with by ignorant and envious politicians, and that, but for this, success would have crowned his arms. They joyfully welcomed the opportunity of serving again under his command. The troops of the late Army of Virginia laid to the account of General Pope their harassing and useless marches, their unsuccessful, because ill-planned and ill-managed, battles, and the mortifying issue of their

¹ See McClellan's letter to Halleck of August 31; *ib.*, 103.

campaign, and were for the most part not averse to coming under the control of a commander who at least knew how to win the enthusiastic devotion of his soldiers, and whose reputation for considerate and careful management was so widespread and so well deserved as was that of General McClellan.

Something of course had to be done at once. The capital was full of stragglers.¹ The discipline of defeated soldiers is never of the best. Notwithstanding the large number of troops within the works, there was some alarm felt for the safety of Washington. The Secretary of War ordered a large part of the contents of the arsenal to be shipped to New York.² The clerks and *employés* of the civil departments were organized, armed, and supplied with ammunition for the defence of the Capital.³ Halleck, of course, had no intention of taking the command of the army in person; this was a task for which he knew he was wholly unsuited. There could be no real doubt as to the choice that must be made. It is true that Pope accused McClellan of having intentionally ruined his campaign by delaying to send out the corps of Franklin and Sumner⁴; but Halleck knew more about this matter than Pope did. There was in truth no alternative for the Government; and, on the 2d of September, McClellan was given "command of the fortifications of Washington and of all the troops for the defence of the Capital."⁵ On the 5th, Pope, who up to this time

¹ 18 W. R., 798; Slough to Stanton.

² *Ib.*, 802, 805.

³ *Ib.*, 807.

⁴ *Ib.*, 808.

⁵ *Ib.*, 807.

had hoped that the Government would reorganize the army under officers friendly to him and send him out at the head of it,¹ was relieved from duty.² He was subsequently sent to the West.³ The army of Virginia was consolidated with the Army of the Potomac,⁴ only the latter name being retained. There was no formal order reinvesting McClellan with the command of the Army of the Potomac; but then he had never been relieved from this command⁵; and as he was the only officer in charge of the troops, he naturally and unavoidably assumed control as well of movements outside the lines of Washington as of those within them.

While these necessary changes and readjustments were being made within the works which encircled the Federal capital, General Lee was considering what use he would make of his victory—what step he would take next. An assault on the fortifications of Washington was too hazardous an experiment to be thought of, and a siege, undertaken by an army of not over 55,000 men, was, of course, out of the question.⁶ There remained the alternative of crossing the Potomac or remaining in Virginia. To take the former course was to keep the initiative—a thing always of great advantage in war. To take the latter, to remain on the defensive in Virginia, was to leave it to the Federal authorities to determine when to recommence hostilities in the field—an option which would not be exercised—the Con-

¹ 18 W. R., 808, 810, 812.

³ *Ib.*, 816.

² *Ib.*, 811, 813.

⁴ *Ib.*, 813.

⁵ See Halleck to McClellan, 14 W. R., 359, 360.

⁶ 28 W. R., 590.

federate commander might feel sure—until the United States army had been so reorganized and strengthened that it was believed to be much more powerful than its adversary.¹ And who could say that the Washington Government, possessing, as it did, the command of the sea, might not again transport its army to the Peninsula, thus transferring the seat of war to the neighborhood of Richmond?

It was true that General Lee's forces were by no means in a fit state to undertake the invasion of the North. "The army," so wrote that officer to President Davis on September 3d,² "is not properly equipped for an invasion of an enemy's territory. It lacks much of the material of war, is feeble in transportation, the animals being much reduced, and the men are poorly provided with clothes, and, in thousands of instances, are destitute of shoes." But the Confederate troops were in high spirits and full of confidence in their commander, and Lee wisely decided to take advantage of the favorable elements in the military situation and to cross the Potomac.

One of the reasons which weighed with General Lee in favor of this course of action was the hope that the presence of the Confederate army in the State of Maryland might arouse the people of that State, or a large part of them, at any rate, to rise against the United States, and declare their State independent of the Union.³ Like all the Border States, Maryland was much divided in opinion. At one time, in the early days of the war, Baltimore

¹ McClellan, in 2 B. & L., 554.

² 28 W. R., 590.

³ *Ib.*, 590.

had fallen completely under the control of the favorers of secession. It is not unlikely that if Maryland had been south of the capital of the Union, instead of north of it, she might have cast in her lot with the majority of the slaveholding States. But, situated as she was, the pressure exercised unhesitatingly by the Government of the United States upon her people prevented the advocates of secession from exhibiting their full strength. There was, undoubtedly, a strong party in all parts of the State in favor of remaining in the Union, especially in the western counties; but in all such cases the party of action is always more aggressive than its opponents, and it was impossible to say whether the presence in the State of a victorious Confederate army might not give the partisans of secession at least a temporary advantage over their adversaries. Anything of this sort would be certain to hamper the movements of the Federal armies, and to diminish their available strength for actual combat. Therefore, under the circumstances, it was impossible for President Davis and General Lee not to entertain a hope that some advantage to their cause might not improbably result from the unveiling of the Confederate flag on the north bank of the Potomac.¹

It must not, however, be supposed that the invasion of the North was undertaken mainly for the effect which it was hoped it might produce on the people of the State of Maryland. Apart from any

¹ Lee to Davis, 28 W. R., 590, 596; Davis to Lee, *ib.*, 598; Lee's Proclamation to the People of Maryland, *ib.*, 601. This hope, however, was not realized. The people of Maryland gave no assistance worth mentioning to the Confederate army.

political change in the attitude of that population, it was eminently desirable to exhibit the spectacle of a Confederate army freely traversing the soil of the States which remained in the Union ; the effect which this might have on northern sentiment, and also on foreign opinion, in the direction of indicating the impossibility of the North's accomplishing the tremendous task of subjugating the South, was likely to be of very great consequence. The party in the North which had always believed in this impossibility would certainly have its belief fortified when an invasion of the North was substituted for an invasion of the South ; and the chance of foreign interference to stop a war in which it seemed plain that the North had no reasonable chance of achieving such a decisive and overwhelming victory as alone would justify such a struggle, could not but be materially increased.

Lastly, General Lee had had thus far such successes in dealing with Pope and McClellan, one of whom was practically certain to command the Union army in the coming campaign, that hopes of obtaining a great victory over the Northern army, the military results of which might be practically decisive of the war, must have influenced him strongly to take such a course as would in all probability bring about a battle before the Union forces had had time to recover from the disorganization and depression caused by their recent defeats. He probably never would find the Federal army in poorer condition for a great struggle (at least so he thought) than at this time.

His own army was, it was true, weak in numbers ;

nevertheless, another chance for victory, as good as that which Pope offered to him at Bull Run on August 30th, might not impossibly occur again.

Accordingly, General Lee at once set about making the necessary arrangements for the establishment of a new line of communications. Neither the Warrenton turnpike nor the Orange and Alexandria railroad could serve him on the north side of the Potomac. The Shenandoah Valley must now be his only avenue of supply. On the 5th of September, he wrote to President Davis,¹ notifying him that the railroad and turnpike had been abandoned as far back as Culpeper Court House, and that henceforth all supplies must be sent from that place by way of Luray Gap and Front Royal to Winchester, where it was proposed to establish a depot of stores.²

With the view that, by crossing east of the Blue Ridge and thus threatening Washington and Baltimore, he could secure the withdrawal of the entire Federal force to the north of the Potomac, and thus be able to feel reasonably secure about his communications, General Lee crossed the Potomac, between the 4th and 7th of September, by the fords in the vicinity of Leesburg.³ The movements of the army were screened by the cavalry under Stuart. On the 7th, the Confederates had retired behind the line of the Monocacy, a stream which empties into the Potomac at a point almost twenty miles south of Frederick City,⁴ and near this place Lee estab-

¹ 28 W. R., 593, 601, 603.

² See Map IX., facing page 350.

³ 27 W. R., 145. 28 W. R., 604, 605,

⁴ Often called Fredericktown, and sometimes Frederick.

lished his headquarters. His intention at this time was to move eastward through the Catoctin and South Mountain ranges to the Cumberland Valley, gathering the supplies with which that fertile region abounded, invading Pennsylvania, occupying Harrisburg, threatening Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington,¹ and in this way occupying the remainder of the autumn, thus postponing to the ensuing spring any Federal invasion of Virginia.² From this plan, however, General Lee almost immediately departed, being tempted by the opportunity presented by the dangerous situation of the Federal troops at Harper's Ferry to renounce, for the time being, at any rate, his larger projects, and to bend all his energies to the capture of this exposed garrison and the guns and stores which they were undertaking to protect.

The town of Harper's Ferry is situated in Virginia, at the junction of the Shenandoah River with the Potomac, and on the left or western bank of the Shenandoah. It is quite capable of defence against an attack from the southwest, where Bolivar Heights run across, behind the town, from one river to the other. But the post is completely commanded by Loudoun Heights on the eastern bank of the Shenandoah, and by the still more lofty Maryland Heights on the opposite bank of the Potomac. Singularly enough, the place had always possessed a certain attraction for the military authorities of both governments. There had been for years before the war

¹ General J. G. Walker in 2 B. & L., 605.

² Lee to Davis ; 28 W. R., 602 : Lee's Report, 27 W. R., 144, 145 ; Swinton, 198.

an armory and an arsenal in the town; it was this arsenal which John Brown and his party seized in October, 1859. In 1861, the Confederate government instructed General J. E. Johnston to occupy the place, but that able officer was not long in discovering that the position was an untenable one; and he soon evacuated it.¹ The Federal general Patterson then occupied it, and from that time on there had always been a Federal force there. On September 1, 1862, there were about 8000 men at the post, including a force of some 2500 men² on Maryland Heights, all under the command of Colonel D. S. Miles, an officer of the regular army.

Why this large force should be shut up in Harper's Ferry instead of serving in the field, it is not easy to see. Undoubtedly it was important to have small bodies of troops stationed at convenient points along the Potomac River for the protection against raids of the Baltimore and Ohio railroad and the Chesapeake and Ohio canal, both which run on the north side of the river and close to it; but a force of 8000 men was altogether out of proportion for any such duty. It is only another proof of Halleck's lack of military sagacity that he should have kept such a considerable force in this place, where it was perfectly useless, at a time, too, when its presence was so much needed to augment the army with which General Pope in August, and General McClellan in September, were endeavoring to make head against the army of General Lee.

Halleck had also stationed a force of some 2500

¹ Part I., 124.

² 27 W. R., 778; cf. 537.

men,¹ under General White, at Winchester in the Shenandoah Valley, but, on receiving word that a large Confederate force was moving down the Valley, he, on September 2d, ordered White to evacuate the town and fall back to Harper's Ferry,² which he did, arriving there on the 3d, and adding the troops which he brought with him to Miles's command. White was thereupon ordered by General Wool, who commanded this military district, to repair to Martinsburg, Virginia, and take command of the troops there,³ consisting of three regiments and a battery, perhaps 2000 men in all.⁴ Why General Wool, or General Halleck, under whose orders he acted, should have expected that the Martinsburg garrison would be more fortunate than the Winchester garrison in being able to hold its position against a superior force, is not apparent.

It thus came about that when General Lee crossed the Potomac into Maryland, both Martinsburg and Harper's Ferry were garrisoned by Union troops. When Lee discovered this, he determined, as we have said, to renounce his projected invasion of Pennsylvania, for the time being at any rate, and to endeavor to capture these detachments. He says in a letter to President Davis,⁵ dated September 12th, that he had supposed that, as soon as it was known that his army had reached Frederick City, the Union forces at Martinsburg and Harper's Ferry would retreat from Virginia; and that, finding himself disappointed in this expectation, he had detached

¹ 16 W. R., 53.

² *Ib.*, 767, *et seq.*

³ 27 W. R., 522.

⁴ *Ib.*, 525.

⁵ 28 W. R., 604.

Jackson and McLaws to capture these troops. In his Report, however, he puts his action in this matter on the ground of necessity. He says that it was "*necessary* to dislodge the enemy" from Martinsburg and Harper's Ferry "before concentrating the army west of the mountains."¹ In this view of the necessity of driving the Federal forces from Martinsburg and Harper's Ferry before attempting the invasion of Maryland and Pennsylvania, several writers of authority have concurred.² But when we bear in mind that the small garrison of Martinsburg would certainly have to evacuate the town if the Confederates made any move in that direction, that Lee did not propose permanently to hold Harper's Ferry, and that therefore it could be re-occupied by Federal troops at any time, we fail to see any military necessity for General Lee's action.³ Assuming that an invasion of the North was a wise move to make,⁴—and Lee's reasons in its favor are certainly strong,—we see nothing in the fact that White was at Martinsburg with 2000 men and Miles at Harper's Ferry with 10,000 men to have rendered the project any more liable to interruption or difficult of accomplishment than if those troops had been (as they assuredly should have been) added to McClellan's army. The fact, in our judgment, is simply this, that General Lee could not resist the temptation to capture these detachments, even although, to effect

¹ 27 W. R., 145.

² Swinton, 200; Palfrey, 19; 2 Henderson, 261.

³ The next year, in the Gettysburg campaign, Lee made no attempt to capture Harper's Ferry.

⁴ Palfrey, 16; Swinton, 198.

this, he deemed it necessary to divide his army into two unequal portions, and to keep it thus divided for several days in presence of a hostile force largely superior in numbers to his army when united. We have already called attention to General Lee's daring and dangerous strategy in this campaign, and this operation of his, which resulted in the capture of these Federal garrisons and in the battle of the Antietam—or Sharpsburg, as it is called by the Confederates—is, as we shall see, most remarkable in showing this quality of extreme hardihood.

Although it was known in the first days of September that the Confederates had disappeared from the front of Washington, it was not known where they had gone—still less what their intentions were. This uncertainty continued even after it was ascertained that they had crossed the Potomac into Maryland ; and until exact information had been obtained, it was not deemed wise, either by General Halleck or General McClellan, to advance far from Washington. But the reports of the cavalry under Pleasonton, who pressed hard upon Stuart, who was screening the movements of the Confederate army, finally satisfied McClellan, who had been slowly marching north with his left on the Potomac and his right on the railroad which connected Washington with Baltimore, that Lee had fallen back behind the Monocacy. Accordingly on the 10th of September he pushed forward more rapidly, and on the 12th and 13th the right wing and centre of his army entered Frederick City.¹

¹ 27 W. R., 42.

The Army of the Potomac, as now organized, consisted of the 1st corps, formerly McDowell's, but now under Hooker; the 2d corps under Sumner; Couch's division of the 4th corps; the 6th corps under Franklin; the 9th corps under Burnside¹; and the 12th corps, formerly Banks's, but now under Mansfield.² McClellan adopted a new system in this campaign. He assigned Burnside to the command of the right wing, consisting of the 1st and 9th corps; Sumner to the command of the centre, consisting of his own corps, the 2d, and the 12th corps; and Franklin to the command of the left wing, consisting of his own corps, the 6th, and Couch's division of the 4th corps.³

The 3d corps, Heintzelman's, the 5th corps, Porter's, and Sigel's corps, now the 11th, with other troops, were left in the lines of Washington. General Banks was assigned to the "command of the defences of the capital."⁵

To each of these corps several of the new regiments which had been raised during the summer were assigned.⁶ These troops, though composed of good material, had had little time for drill, could not be said to have acquired any discipline, and therefore could not be counted as very useful additions to the army. Had the Government refused to organize these new battalions, and distributed these

¹ Cox's Kanawha Division was at this time incorporated in the 9th corps; 27 W. R., 178.

² 27 W. R., 40.

³ The other division of this corps—Peck's—was still in the Peninsula.

⁴ Two divisions of this corps were sent to McClellan on September 12th, the third on September 16th.

⁵ 28 W. R., 202, 214.

⁶ *Ib.*, 197.

recruits among the old regiments, the result would have been a sensible and welcome augmentation of the strength of the army.

The Army of the Potomac, when it left Washington numbered on paper a little less than 84,000 men,¹ —in reality, somewhat over 67,000 men. There were left in and near Washington, nominally, about 72,000 or 73,000 men; but the number actually ready for duty unquestionably was considerably less.² From these troops, two divisions of the 5th corps, under Porter, those of Morell and Sykes, numbering 12,930 men, were sent to join McClellan on September 12th, at his urgent request,³ thereby raising his entire (nominal) force to nearly 97,000 men.⁴

The Army of Northern Virginia had recently been reinforced by the divisions of D. H. Hill and McLaws,

¹ McClellan gives (27 W. R., 67) the number of his troops at the battle of Antietam, as 87,164

Deduct the two divisions of the 5th corps, which were not sent to him until the 12th of September 12,930

We have left 74,234

Add Couch's division, not in the battle (28 W. R., 336) 7,219

Add the losses at South Mountain, Crampton's Gap, etc. (27 W. R., 204) 2,430

And we have , 83,883
as the number with which he started out from Washington. Cf., Palfrey, 7; Allan, 327. As to the deduction to be made from these returns, see Palfrey, 70. In this work we also shall consider a deduction of 20 per cent. a fair allowance for men on extra duty, etc. Cf. Allan, 398.

² Banks to Halleck, with estimate, 28 W. R., 265; Irwin to Williams, *Ib.*, 266.

³ *Ib.*, 254, 255.

⁴ McClellan also advised Halleck to send him the troops at Harper's Ferry, (28 W. R., 254) but Halleck replied that there was no way at that time for Miles to join him; that the only thing for Miles to do was to defend himself until communications could be opened with McClellan's army. (27 W. R., 44).

the division of J. G. Walker, and a brigade of cavalry under Hampton.¹ These troops (leaving out Walker's division) originally numbered 19,000 men, but they had lost considerably by fatigue and straggling, for they had marched all the way from Richmond.² Even with these additions, the army was perhaps no stronger than it was before the movement on Manassas, two weeks before.³ At that time, its strength in the three arms, is given by the best Confederate authority at from 50,000 to 55,000 men.⁴ It would probably be approximately correct to say that General Lee had under him on September 3d, when this Maryland campaign began, about 55,000 men.⁵ That

¹ Allan, 199.² *Ib.*, 324.³ *Ib.*, 324.⁴ *Ib.*, 212, n.

⁵ The Army of Northern Virginia on September 22, 1862,—five days after the battle of Sharpsburg,—is officially (28 W. R., 621) stated as having "present for duty" officers and men 36,418

In this return it is said that the cavalry and reserve artillery are not reported.

The official return (27 W. R., 810-813) of the killed and wounded in all the engagements of the campaign in thirty-nine brigades of infantry and some of the batteries shows a loss of 10,291

We thus get a figure of 46,709

To this number should be added :

1. The cavalry and reserve artillery not included in the return of "present for duty" on September 22d.

2. The losses in killed and wounded in the other batteries, in the cavalry, and in Jones's brigade of Jackson's division, none of which are included among the 10,291.

3. The prisoners captured, reckoned by General McClellan (27 W. R., 67, 161) at 5000 or 6000.

4. The stragglers who had not returned to their regiments.

It would seem, therefore, that the estimate given in the text of 55,000 men at the beginning of the campaign is approximately correct.

General Longstreet's estimate is 57,000 men, exclusive of artillery and cavalry (2 B. & L., 674), but his figures will not bear examination.

That Jones's brigade of Jackson's division was in the battle, and suffered loss, see 27 W. R., 808, 1008.

he was unable to keep them all with the colors will appear as we proceed.

When the Federal troops entered Frederick City on September 12th and 13th, they found that their adversaries had departed. General Lee had decided upon his movement against Harper's Ferry as early as the 9th, and had on that day issued a special order¹ to his generals, prescribing to each his allotted part in the difficult and dangerous task which was now to be attempted. The whole army was to march west on the following day, the 10th, as far as Middletown,—Jackson, with his own division and those of Ewell and A. P. Hill, in the advance. From Middletown, Jackson was to proceed west, over the South Mountain range, to Sharpsburg, and there cross the Potomac, march on Martinsburg, capture the Federal garrison at that place, and intercept any Union troops who might attempt to escape from Harper's Ferry. Longstreet, with the divisions of D. R. Jones and Hood, and the brigade of Evans of his own corps, followed by the division of D. H. Hill of Jackson's corps, and accompanied by Lee himself, was to follow Jackson, pass through Middletown, cross the South Mountain range, and halt at Boonsborough. McLaws, with his own division and that of R. H. Anderson, both of Longstreet's corps, was to follow Longstreet, but at Middletown he was to march southwestwardly through Burkittsville to and across the South Mountain range into Pleasant Valley, to take possession of Maryland Heights and endeavor to capture the

¹ 27 W. R., 42 ; 28 W. R., 603.

garrison of Harper's Ferry. Finally, J. G. Walker's division of Longstreet's corps was to cross the Potomac near the mouth of the Monocacy, march up on the south side of the river, take possession of Loudoun Heights, and co-operate with McLaws in the reduction of Harper's Ferry. This programme was somewhat modified so far as Jackson was concerned. That officer, fearing lest the Federal force at Martinsburg might retreat to the west, if his advance against it should be made from Sharpsburg and Shepherdstown, directed his march northwestwardly on Williamsport, where he crossed the Potomac, making a considerable *détour*, and was thus able to bar the retreat of General White to the westward.¹ The main body, also, under Longstreet and Lee, instead of halting at Boonsborough, pursued its march to Hagerstown.² Here, or at Boonsborough, the troops of Jackson, McLaws, and Walker were ordered to rejoin the main body, after their tasks should have been fulfilled.³

General Lee based his hope of success in this operation partly upon the expectation that the very deliberate movements of the Federal forces would be continued,⁴ and partly on the expectation that McLaws would be able to take possession of Maryland Heights and Walker of Loudoun Heights by the morning of Friday, September 12th.⁵ But his expectations as to the performance of his lieutenants were too sanguine; it was not until the afternoon

¹ 27 W. R., 953.

² *Ib.*, 145.

³ 28 W. R., 604.

⁴ 27 W. R., 145.

⁵ 28 W. R., 603, 604.

of Sunday, the 14th, that McLaws, who had entered Pleasant Valley on the 11th, was able to shell Harper's Ferry from Maryland Heights,¹ nor was it until nearly the same time that Walker was prepared to open from Loudoun Heights.² This part of the programme consumed two days and a half longer than General Lee had expected. Jackson, however, marching with great celerity, crossed the Potomac at Williamsport on the 11th, and entered Martinsburg on the morning of the 12th,³ as General Lee had expected he would do⁴; and on the 13th, about noon, the head of his column came in view of the Federal force posted strongly on Bolivar Heights. As nothing could be seen at this time by Jackson of McLaws and Walker, the remainder of the day was necessarily taken up in communicating with them. It was, therefore, not until the morning of the 14th, that Jackson, with all his energy, could begin operations against Harper's Ferry, and, as we have already said, McLaws and Walker were not in position until the afternoon of the same day.

This exceeding of the expected time of its absence by the expeditionary force would have been serious enough for General Lee under any circumstances, but the fortune of war added an element of unusual peril to his situation. A copy of his Special Order, of which we have above given the substance, was on the 13th found in the abandoned Confederate camp⁵; and McClellan, who had not yet been able fully⁶ to

¹ 27 W. R., 854.

² *Ib.*, 913.

³ *Ib.*, 953.

⁴ 28 W. R., 603.

⁵ 27 W. R., 42; Palfrey, 20-22; Allan, 343.

⁶ 28 W. R., 270, 272.

put together the various reports which had reached him of the movements of his enemy, was at once placed in possession of the plans of his adversary and of the destination and approximate positions of his different divisions. He knew that at that moment¹ Longstreet and D. H. Hill, under Lee's direct command—fourteen brigades only—were the only troops directly in front of him—that they were probably at Boonsborough or Hagerstown; that McLaws and Anderson, with ten brigades, were in Pleasant Valley, striving to get possession of Maryland Heights; that on the opposite side of the Potomac, near or on Loudoun Heights, was the division of Walker, consisting of two brigades; and that the remainder of Jackson's corps—fourteen brigades—was by this time, probably, also on the south side of the river, fronting Bolivar Heights, which, it will be remembered, is the name given to the high ridge which runs between the Potomac and the Shenandoah, and is the southwest boundary of the post of Harper's Ferry.

To be put suddenly into complete possession of one's adversary's intentions and situation is a piece of good luck which has rarely happened even to the fortunate generals of the world; but the good luck is the more striking in this case because the facts disclosed were so extremely favorable for General McClellan. The main fact—the one which far outweighed all the others in importance—was, that it was probably possible by a prompt advance to fight Lee and Longstreet alone with the entire Army of

¹ 28 W. R., 281.

the Potomac. It was also shown to be probably possible to relieve Miles at Harper's Ferry. But what was that, compared to the opportunity of striking the force commanded by Lee in person when it was so gravely weakened by the detachments sent off for the capture of Harper's Ferry? Yet McClellan, in writing to Halleck¹ to announce to him the finding of Lee's Special Order, impressed as he had been for the past few days by the danger to which the troops at Harper's Ferry were exposed, seemed to regard the relief of that post as his first and chief duty. He says, it is true, that he believes that Lee has 120,000 men, and outnumbered him when these troops are united, but he does not say that he (McClellan) is bending all his energies to the task of attacking Lee now that he has not his entire army with him. There is, in fact, nothing in the letter which rises above the level of ordinary correspondence. McClellan's abstract of the discovered Order is exceedingly confused; he either had no views which he cared to impart to Halleck, or else he had no defined views himself. He evidently saw nothing specially inspiring in the situation. The same evening he wrote to the Adjutant General a letter² about the artillery service in the regular army—just such a letter as he might have written at any time. McClellan, it is plain, did not propose to hurry his movements, even when Fortune herself beckoned him on to victory.

Instead, therefore, of ordering his army to march

¹ 28 W. R., 281; September 13th, 11 P.M.

² *Ib.*, 282.

at nightfall of the 13th, which would have brought the troops to the Gaps in the South Mountain range by daybreak, McClellan postponed their advance till the morning of the 14th.¹ There was no reason in the world why he should not have called on his troops for a night-march in this emergency. Since leaving Washington they had been marching very slowly; the weather was fine; the roads were excellent²; and whether it was proposed to follow McLaws into Pleasant Valley and there overwhelm him, or to push on rapidly after Lee and Longstreet, it was absolutely necessary for the Union army to possess at the earliest moment the Passes through the South Mountain range. When McClellan discovered Lee's Order—on September 13th—these Passes were not occupied in any force by the Confederates. D. H. Hill was a mile or two west of Boonsborough, and Longstreet was as far off as Hagerstown.³ Only Stuart, who covered with his cavalry the movements of the infantry divisions, and was supported by one brigade,⁴ was opposing the advancing columns of the Union army. In fact, it was not Lee's original intention to make a stand at the Passes⁵; he had expected to reunite his scattered divisions west of the mountains before McClellan should arrive at the mountains; but when he learned of the disclosure of his plan to the enemy, as he did that evening,⁶ he

¹ 27 W. R., 48.

² Palfrey, 29.

³ Long to McLaws, 28 W. R., 606. Cf. D. H. Hill, in 2 B. & L., 560.

⁴ Colquitt's; 27 W. R., 1052.

⁵ 27 W. R., 145.

⁶ Allan, 345. "A citizen, friendly to the Confederate cause had accidentally been present when the Order had been brought to McClellan, and had

feared lest a strong Federal force should cross at one or more of the Gaps, and endeavor to crush McLaws in Pleasant Valley. Hence he promptly ordered Hill to return to the Boonsborough Pass, or Turner's Gap, as it is often called, and directed Longstreet to march back with all speed from Hagerstown to support him. Stuart—of his own motion, apparently—¹ intrusted the defence of Crampton's Gap, five miles south of Turner's Gap, through which Federal troops, intending to strike McLaws, would naturally pass, to Colonel Munford of his command. By the early morning of the 14th these troops, with the exception of Longstreet's command, were in position; but had McClellan acted with energy and promptness the moment he came into possession of Lee's plans, the Federal troops would have forestalled their adversaries.

As it was, it was not until the afternoon of the 14th that the Union generals were prepared to carry the Passes. The northernmost Pass, known as Turner's Gap, was held chiefly by the troops of D. H. Hill, —Longstreet coming up too late to be of much assistance. It was carried by the 1st and 9th corps after a spirited defence. In the action the brave and capable Reno was killed. The Federal troops could not, however, advance that afternoon to the westerly side of the mountain. Franklin at the same time carried Crampton's Gap, which was stoutly

heard the expressions of gratification that followed, and had learned of the orders then issued. He lost no time in leaving Frederick, and, making his way through the lines, brought this information after night to Stuart, who at once forwarded it to General Lee."

¹ 27 W. R., 818, 826.

defended by Munford's cavalry, assisted, but not very efficiently,¹ by troops of McLaws's command. Franklin effected a lodgment of his troops in Pleasant Valley before night set in.

But while these efforts were being made for the relief of the garrison of Harper's Ferry, its besiegers had not been idle. Kershaw, commanding one of McLaws's brigades, had, on the 13th, gallantly pushed his way to Maryland Heights, and had routed the Union troops under Ford,² who had attempted to hold the position. A battery was immediately brought up, and on the afternoon of the 14th, while McClellan was attacking the Gaps, McLaws was able to open fire from a height of over six hundred feet on the town, and to shell the camps of the Federal garrison. Walker, also, in the forenoon of the 14th, began firing from Loudoun Heights, at a height of three hundred feet.³ This cannonade, which could not be effectively returned, did much to demoralize the Union troops, who, indeed, with some reason, lost heart, after the abandonment of Maryland Heights by Ford.⁴ Jackson, meantime, was making careful preparation to carry Bolivar Heights by storm the next morning. Early on the 15th fire was opened upon the Federal troops and their defences from all quarters; there was no resistance; the commanders and the troops

¹ 27 W. R., 827, 870.

² Ford was afterwards dismissed the service; 27 W. R., 803.

³ Munford's Address on Lee's Invasion of Maryland, 49.

⁴ Jackson, however, placed little reliance on McLaws and Walker. He says:—"In consequence of the distance, and range of their guns, not much could be expected from their artillery so long as the enemy retained his advanced position on Bolivar Heights." 27 W. R., 953.

alike considered their case hopeless; and at 9 A.M. the post was surrendered. While the negotiations were going on, Colonel Miles was mortally wounded, and the papers, by which the garrison were made prisoners of war and immediately paroled,¹ were signed by General White. The Federal cavalry, however, under Colonel B. F. Davis, having crossed the river on the afternoon of the 14th, made their escape under the shadow of Maryland Heights to Greencastle, Pennsylvania, capturing an ordnance-train of Longstreet's on their way,²—a daring and skilfully executed feat, for which Davis justly received high commendation,³—the only creditable circumstance for the Union troops in the whole affair.

It is not unlikely that this hasty surrender would not have been made, had Franklin, in the early morning of the 15th, forced his way to Maryland Heights, and displayed the United States flag to the demoralized and apparently neglected garrison of Harper's Ferry, and he has been severely criticized for having made no serious effort to accomplish this.⁴ It must, however, be remembered that McLaws, as soon as he learned of the forcing of Crampton's Gap by the Federal troops, established a formidable line of defence across Pleasant Valley, from Elk Ridge⁵ on the west to South Mountain on the east,⁶ and succeeded in conveying to his antagonist the appear-

¹ 27 W. R., 529.

² 28 W. R., 305.

³ 27 W. R., 802.

⁴ Palfrey, 43-45; Allan, 363-366.

⁵ Maryland Heights are the southern extremity of Elk Ridge.

⁶ 27 W. R., 855.

ance of having occupied the line in great strength.¹ Franklin, in fact, thought that he was outnumbered, "two to one."² While he remained in presence of this force, Harper's Ferry surrendered, and McLaws, during the afternoon of the 15th, skilfully and without molestation, withdrew his command across the river to the town. In considering the caution exhibited by Franklin in this affair, we must remember that he had been warned to provide against an attack on his right rear by way of Rohrerstown,³ which might be made for the purpose of relieving his pressure on McLaws, and that Couch's division was accordingly occupying that place, and also, that, for all he knew, Jackson might send a portion of his command across the river to the assistance of McLaws.

Let us return now to General Lee. The storming of Turner's Gap on the afternoon of September 14th had left him no choice but to retire the next morning. He had with him only D. R. Jones's and Hood's divisions,—eight brigades,⁴—and the brigade of Evans,—of Longstreet's corps, and the division of D. H. Hill,—five brigades,—of Jackson's corps, fourteen brigades in all,—say 11,000 men,—with the cavalry and the reserve artillery,—8000 men,⁵—say 19,000 men in all. The enemy's main army was certain to advance upon him and bring him to battle, as soon, at least, as the constitutional slowness of McClellan would admit. Stuart had brought him

¹ Allan, 364 ; Franklin, in 2 B. & L., 596.

² 27 W. R., 47, 53.

³ Ruggles to Franklin, 27 W. R., 47.

⁴ Of these, six belonged to Jones and two to Hood.

⁵ Allan, 380.

word that Franklin had forced Crampton's Gap, and there was every reason to expect that he would attack McLaws in the morning,—presumably with superior forces. In this state of affairs General Lee felt that further operations against Harper's Ferry must be postponed to the imperative necessity of reuniting his scattered divisions. By the battles of Turner's and Crampton's Gaps everything had been changed. The main army of McClellan was close upon him. Lee decided that he could not safely remain north of the Potomac, and at eight P.M. of the 14th he so wrote to McLaws,¹ telling him to abandon his position that night, and to cross the river, if possible, by a ford east of that at Shepherdstown, leaving the ford at Shepherdstown for the main army to take. But in less than two hours Lee had changed his mind—why, we are not informed—and had determined to await battle north of the Potomac. At 10.15 P.M. he wrote to Colonel Munford² of the cavalry to pilot McLaws, if possible, over the mountains to Sharpsburg; and, an hour later,³ he wrote to McLaws, informing him that the main army would go to Keedysville,⁴ a village two or three miles northeast

¹ 108 W. R., 618. Jackson, also, was ordered "to take position at Shepherdstown to cover Lee's crossing into Virginia," but subsequently the order was changed. Douglas, in 2 B. & L., 627. Jackson replied to the first order "that he could cross the river and join General Lee at Sharpsburg." Letter to the writer from Colonel Douglas, and quoted from his notes, written in 1865.

² 28 W. R., 609.

³ *Ib.*, 608. This despatch is inaccurate in speaking of crossing the mountain "below Crampton's Gap toward Sharpsburg." The mountain which lay between McLaws and Sharpsburg was Elk Ridge, not the South Mountain. Crampton's Gap is in the South Mountain.

⁴ Sometimes called Centreville.

of Sharpsburg, and, while not forbidding McLaws to cross the river, suggesting that he should go to Sharpsburg across country. This order was confirmed by a despatch sent to McLaws the next day, the 15th, from Keedysville.¹

This decision, to stand and fight at Sharpsburg, which General Lee took on the evening of the 14th of September,—just after his troops had been driven from the South Mountain Passes—is beyond controversy one of the boldest and most hazardous decisions in his whole military career. It is in truth so bold and so hazardous that one is bewildered that he should even have thought seriously of making it. Nearly the whole force which he had on the north bank of the Potomac had been engaged that afternoon in an unsuccessful attempt to hold a defensive position, and it had been badly beaten. Hill's troops had found themselves largely outnumbered, and Longstreet's had arrived footsore and weary, only to find themselves also outmatched by their antagonists. There could not be the slightest doubt that the Union army, now greatly encouraged, would follow up its advantage. Lee knew that McClellan was perfectly aware that Jackson, Walker, McLaws, and Anderson were at or near Harper's Ferry. There was assuredly no reason why McClellan should not force a battle while the odds continued so decidedly in his favor. There was really nothing to prevent his attacking the Confederates the next day, the 15th, with the advantage of superior numbers, and with the additional advantage of having just

¹ 28 W. R., 609, Long to McLaws.

been victorious. Lee could perhaps count upon delaying his pursuers at Keedysville, or at Antietam Creek, during one day, but he must have been obliged to look fully in the face the probability that a great battle would be fought on the 16th.—and he certainly could not count on all the Harper's Ferry contingent being reunited to the main army so soon as that.¹ Then the position at Sharpsburg, though in many respects a good one, was a hopeless one for his army, if it should be defeated.² There was but one way of crossing the Potomac in his rear—by the ford at Shepherdstown. The peril was of a character not to be thought of with calmness.³ A defeat would mean a rout—the loss of thousands of prisoners—of hundreds of guns. And for what was this fearful risk to be incurred? One can imagine nothing but the avoidance of a loss of military prestige,⁴ involved, it might be thought, in leaving the soil of Maryland without fighting a battle. It was not enough, it might be said, to have captured Harper's Ferry,—there must be a battle. But could General Lee seriously suppose that his veteran army would lose either in its own self-respect, or in its absolute confidence in him, if he should see fit to reunite its scattered divisions south of the Potomac, where the operation could be safely and easily accomplished? One can hardly think so. Of his two principal lieu-

¹ The divisions of McLaws, Anderson, and A. P. Hill, fifteen brigades in all, did not reach Lee till the 17th. One brigade—Thomas's—was left at Harper's Ferry.

² *Cf.* Allan, 373.

³ But see Palfrey, 49. *Cf.* Pendleton, 27 W. R., 830.

⁴ *Cf.* Palfrey, 49.

tenants, one, Longstreet, was opposed to this perilous course.¹ Jackson, however, was, as we know,² in favor of making a stand at Sharpsburg. Of his attitude on this question General Lee wrote³: "When he (Jackson) came upon the field, having preceded his troops, and learned my reasons for offering battle, he emphatically concurred with me. When I determined to withdraw across the Potomac, he also concurred; but said then, in view of all the circumstances, it was better to have fought the battle in Maryland than to have left it without a struggle." But as for the army generally, who can suppose that the confidence of the officers and men could have been shaken in their commander, had Lee adopted the more prudent course of reuniting his scattered and straggling troops on the south bank of the Potomac?

General Lee, however, thought that there was a fair chance for him to win a victory over McClellan. He exaggerated the influence which the recent defeat of the Federal army at Manassas had had upon its *moral*. General Walker says that he spoke of that army before the campaign opened, as "in a very demoralized and chaotic condition."⁴ But this was very far from being the fact. The Federal army had no doubt suffered a good deal from its experiences in the month of August, and it was now somewhat hampered and hindered from the fact that it

¹ 2 B. & L., 666.

² *Ante*, 348, n.

³ Letter from General Lee to Mrs. Jackson, dated Lexington, Va., January 25th, 1866.

⁴ 2 B. & L., 606.

had very recently been reorganized. But it was nevertheless a well-disciplined and veteran army, inured to war, and it was, for the most part, led by brave and competent officers. General Lee, in truth, seems to have been unable to discriminate between successes obtained against poor troops, and successes obtained against good troops—poorly led. There was nothing in the Manassas campaign to indicate that the Union troops were poor troops. Naturally, he did not consider them as good as his own, and it is without doubt true that they did not constitute so good an army as that which he commanded. They were at that time badly organized and poorly led. But since Manassas things had changed. The Army of the Potomac was now in the field, and under its favorite general. That army could do a great deal of hard fighting; in bravery and stubbornness, and in power of recuperation after defeat, it was quite the equal of the Army of Northern Virginia; and had its 75,000 or 80,000 men been commanded at this moment by a Lee, with a Jackson in charge of one wing and a Longstreet in charge of the other, there would have been no chance of escape for the Army of Northern Virginia.¹ It is certainly a mistake for a general to overestimate his adversary's strength and prowess; it is no less a mistake, however, to underestimate them. But this was, as we know, the habit of General Lee's mind;² and his subsequent successes confirmed him in it. It was not until the disastrous assault on the heights of Gettysburg that he found out his mistake.

¹ Palfrey, 17, 18.

² *Ante*, 204.

On the night of the 14th, General Lee, evidently finding it impossible to make any stand at Keedysville, as he had proposed to do, retired to and across Antietam Creek to the neighborhood of Sharpsburg.¹ Here, early on the morning of the 15th, he took up his position, facing east.² On the right of his line, on a high hill, stood the village of Sharpsburg. About half or three quarters of a mile south-east of the town, the Antietam was crossed by a stone bridge, afterwards known as Burnside's Bridge. Antietam Creek, though fordable in many places, constituted nevertheless a considerable obstacle to the passage of troops, especially of artillery; but it was only at Burnside's Bridge and below that it was held by the Confederates; their centre and left being posted well to the westward of it. The turnpike to Hagerstown, which runs nearly due north from Sharpsburg, was a marked feature in the field of battle. It ran behind the Confederate line, and was the principal avenue of communication between the different parts of the army. About a mile from Sharpsburg, on the west side of the turnpike and close to it, stood (and still stands) a little church, of brick, painted white, belonging to a sect known as Dunkers. To the west of the turnpike the ground was broken and uneven, and not much of it was cultivated, while to the east of it there was easy, rolling, unobstructed ground, even the woods being free from underbrush, and there were several farms, and the fields were generally under cultivation.

¹ 27 W. R., 839, 1021, 1022.

² See Map X., facing page 376.

The whole Confederate line, from Burnside's Bridge on the south to the extremity of their left, was perhaps three miles in length, and during the 15th was occupied only by the divisions of D. R. Jones and Hood and the brigade of Evans of Longstreet's corps, the division of D. H. Hill of Jackson's corps, Stuart's cavalry, and the Reserve Artillery,—fourteen brigades of infantry and three of cavalry,—18,000 or 19,000 men, with about 125 guns.¹

These troops were thus posted: Stuart, with the greater part of the cavalry and horse-artillery, held the extreme left of the line, occupying a commanding hill² not far from the Potomac, situated perhaps a third of a mile northwest of the Dunker Church. Hood, with his two brigades, held the ground near the church³ and beyond it. He connected with Stuart on his left and with D. H. Hill on his right, and faced to the north and northeast. D. H. Hill, with his five brigades, held the left-centre of the line, facing east. His troops were posted a quarter of a mile or more east of the turnpike. On his right was the brigade of Evans, occupying the centre of the line, and watching the two bridges over the Antietam. On the heights of Sharpsburg and on the high ground overlooking the lower fords was stationed the division of D. R. Jones with its six brigades. On the extreme right of the army Colonel Munford was posted with his brigade of cavalry.⁴ On every suita-

¹ Cf. 27 W. R., 835-837.

² *Ib.*, 819, 957; Allan, 393; Palfrey, 80, 84; Swinton, 211; McClellan's Stuart, 130.

³ 27 W. R., 922, 923.

⁴ Cf. Allan, 377, 378.

ble eminence the Confederates had placed their batteries, and the ground presented many positions adapted to the effective use of guns.¹

Against this small force General McClellan was advancing with the 1st, 2d, 5th,² and 12th corps and the cavalry, containing nominally about 75,000 officers and men, and numbering in reality over 60,000.³ The morning of the 15th found the Confederates retreating from the South Mountain; the weather was fine; the roads were excellent and unobstructed; it was only seven miles from the Mountain to Antietam Creek; there was nothing to prevent McClellan from taking advantage of the unique opportunity which had fallen to his lot. By noon the bulk of his troops might have been brought into contact with the enemy. But McClellan, not appreciating the circumstances, hesitated and delayed, and nothing whatever was done on September 15th.

Early on the morning of the 16th Lee's army was reinforced by the arrival from Harper's Ferry of Jackson, with his own division under J. R. Jones, and Ewell's division under Lawton,⁴ and of J. G. Walker of Longstreet's corps, with his own division,⁵—ten brigades in all, say 8000 men, with a full complement of artillery. Jackson's troops were at once sent to the left of the line, relieving Hood, who was placed in support of them. Jones took position

¹ See note 1, at the end of this chapter.

² Two divisions of this corps under Porter had left Washington on the 12th, and had now joined the army. One of these, however, Morell's, did not reach Keedysville until noon of the 16th.

³ 27 W. R., 67; see Palfrey, 70.

⁴ 27 W. R., 955.

⁵ *Ib.*, 914.

on the west of the Hagerstown turnpike and Lawton on the east of it. Lawton's division connected on its right with that of D. H. Hill. Walker was placed on the extreme right of the line, south of Sharpsburg. Longstreet had general charge of the right of the Confederate army, and Jackson of the left.

One would have supposed that McClellan, whose estimate of the numbers of Lee's army was (as was usual with him) far too high, would have called up Franklin from Pleasant Valley with certainly two out of his three divisions,—one, perhaps, being left to watch McLaws. And he undoubtedly entertained this design in the morning of the 15th,¹ but he did not act upon it; in fact, he soon reconsidered this scheme. It is plain from subsequent despatches written during the 15th, that he still expected Franklin to watch, and, if he could, to attack McLaws, and he even thought of sending Burnside to reinforce him.² It was not till 7.30 P.M. of the 16th that McClellan ordered Franklin to join him, leaving a small force on Maryland Heights.³ Yet before 8 A.M. of that day he had learned of the capture of Harper's Ferry,⁴ and he might, one would think, have divined that McLaws and the other Confederate officers in that vicinity would march at once to join Lee, in which event he would need the

¹ See the despatch of 8.45 A.M., September 15th (107 W. R., 835). This was not received by Franklin,—so he has informed the writer. It is not certain that these supplemental despatches, which (as the writer is informed) are taken from McClellan's "manifold despatch book," were ever sent; but at any rate, they show what was passing in his mind.

² 107 W. R., 836, 837.

³ *Ib.*, 839.

⁴ *Ib.*, 839.

aid of the 6th corps. But he delayed summoning Franklin till evening.

On the afternoon of September 16th McClellan completed his preparations for the battle which he proposed to deliver the next day. He had somewhat changed his dispositions. Sumner was now on the right of the army with his two corps,—the 2d and 12th,—in place of Burnside, whom McClellan had put on the left of the line, and from whose command he had removed the 1st corps under Hooker.¹ This he had placed on the extreme right, Sumner, with the 2d and 12th corps, coming next; then Porter with the 5th, occupying the centre of the line; and then Burnside with the 9th corps. When Franklin, with the divisions of Slocum and W. F. Smith of the 6th corps, should arrive the next morning from Pleasant Valley, McClellan proposed to use them as a general reserve to the whole army. His plan, as stated by himself in his final and elaborate report,² was to attack the Confederate left with the 1st and 12th corps, supported by the 2d, and if necessary by the 6th, “and, as soon as matters looked favorably there,” to carry the heights of Sharpsburg with the 9th corps. If these assaults or either of them should prove successful, he intended to advance his centre with all his disposable forces. He proposed to begin at once by pushing Hooker across

¹ 107 W. R., 837.

² 27 W. R., 55. In his first report (*ib.*, 30) he says that he intended “to create a diversion in favor of the main attack with the hope of something more, by assailing the enemy’s right.” This language may be construed as showing an intention to make a simultaneous attack on both ends of the line. *Cf.* Cox, in 2 B. & L., 633; Palfrey, 107. Also, 27 W. R., 63.

the Antietam that afternoon, with the intention of gaining a foothold on the enemy's left.

Accordingly, about 2 P.M. of September 16th, the 1st corps, alone and unsupported,¹ left its camp, and about four o'clock crossed the creek by the upper of the three bridges which spanned it. When the troops reached the Hagerstown turnpike they were faced to the south; and, marching on the turnpike and on both sides of it,—Meade's division in front,—they encountered the enemy about dark. On account of the lateness of the hour, no serious engagement followed, and the only effect of this hazardous operation was to indicate to the Confederates the plan of the Union general. At 11.30 on the same evening² the 12th corps under Mansfield also crossed the Antietam, following the route taken by the 1st corps, and bivouacked for the night a mile and a half north of Hooker's troops.³ Two corps,—say 18,000 or 19,000 men,⁴—were now across the creek, and menacing the Confederate left. But they were not so disposed as to be able to act in unison; and they were not under one commander.

On the morning of the next day, the 17th, Sumner, who in person commanded the 2d corps, and who had been ordered to put his troops in readiness to march to the support of General Hooker an hour before daylight, and whose corps was ready to move

¹ It is plain that Hooker recognized the perilous character of this operation; 27 W. R., 217.

² *Ib.*, 275.

³ *Ib.*, 475. The position may have been designated by Hooker; 107 W. R., 839.

⁴ Allan, 398.

at that time, receiving no orders, and hearing the sound of heavy firing across the creek, rode to McClellan's headquarters to obtain instructions, waited there an hour or more, without seeing him,¹ and did not get orders to move till half-past seven o'clock.²

With these badly conceived and ill-combined movements did General McClellan begin the battle of the Antietam.

Somewhere about half-past five or six o'clock Hooker's corps left its bivouac, and, marching south on both sides of the Hagerstown turnpike, speedily encountered the enemy. Jackson (as we know) was in charge of the left of Lee's army, and the first shock fell on Ewell's division, under Lawton, and on Jackson's old division, now commanded by J. R. Jones. This officer was speedily carried off the field wounded. His place was taken by Starke, who shortly fell mortally hurt. The losses in this struggle, which lasted for more than an hour, were terrible. "Colonel Douglass, commanding Lawton's brigade, was killed. General Lawton, commanding division, and Colonel Walker, commanding brigade, were severely wounded. More than half of the brigades of Lawton and Hays were either killed or wounded, and more than a third of Trimble's, and all the regimental commanders in those brigades, except two, were killed or wounded."³ Hood's two brigades were soon sent for, and came to the assistance of Jones's and Lawton's exhausted troops, as did also

¹ Letter from Colonel S. S. Sumner, 6th cavalry, then on the staff of his father, General E. V. Sumner.

² 27 W. R., 275.

³ Jackson's Report, *ib.*, 956.

three brigades of D. H. Hill's division. The Federal troops were in equal or perhaps superior force,¹ and were well led by Hooker himself, and by Doubleday, Ricketts, and Meade, his division-commanders. The struggle was most determined,² but the Union troops, after fighting a good hour or more, drew off. Finally, Hooker was wounded,³ and obliged to leave the field. He had lost upwards of 2500 men⁴ in this brief engagement out of the 9000 or 10,000 which he had brought upon the field.⁵ On the Confederate side, the divisions of J. R. Jones and Lawton had lost nearly half their numbers and were practically *hors de combat*.⁶

If the corps of Mansfield had been at hand while this action was being fought, the result might very possibly have been the overwhelming of the troops which constituted the left of the Army of Northern Virginia; but that corps, though starting at the first sound of the cannon, had a mile and a half to march before reaching the field. The troops then had to deploy,⁷ and could not get into action until Hooker's troops, exhausted by their hard fighting and losses, were about retiring⁸ to the shelter of their artillery, where under Meade, who had succeeded Hooker in

¹ Cf. Allan, 397, 398.

² See, *e. g.*, 27 W. R., 224, 225, 255, 968, etc.

³ Probably before 9 A.M. He was wounded before Sumner came up (27 W. R., 275), and this was shortly after nine o'clock (*ib.*, 476). General Meade (*ib.*, 270), who puts the arrival of the 12th corps at about 10 A.M., and the wounding of Hooker at after eleven, is clearly in error. The 12th corps was engaged as early as eight o'clock. See Allan, 392, n. 4.

⁴ 27 W. R., 200.

⁵ Allan, 398.

⁶ *ib.*, 389, 390, 393; 27 W. R., 968, 969.

⁷ 27 W. R., 475.

⁸ Palfrey, 78.

command,¹ they subsequently reorganized their shattered battalions.² It was at least half-past seven o'clock³ before the troops of the 12th corps, some of whom were raw regiments,⁴ were in a position to make their attack, and, in the meantime, their commander, General Mansfield, a gallant veteran, had been killed. His place was, however, filled by Williams, a brave and experienced officer. The movement of the 1st corps had been in great part from the north down the turnpike and on both sides of it, as well as in part from the east, but that of the 12th corps was almost entirely on the east side of the turnpike, and was made in a southwesterly direction. The first Confederate troops struck were the brigades of D. H. Hill's and Hood's divisions, of which we have just spoken, and, after a stubborn and extremely gallant resistance, these troops, already shattered and exhausted, were forced to give way in some confusion. The victorious Federals poured across the Hagerstown turnpike, and Greene's division got possession of the Dunker Church and the ground near it on the west side of the road. In this struggle also, which lasted an hour or more, the casualties on both sides were very heavy, and the troops of the 12th corps, although successful, needed a period of rest before again assuming the offensive. The 12th corps lost some 1700 men⁵ out of the 7000⁶ brought into action. The Confederate loss must have been far greater.

¹ 27 W. R., 270.

² Cf. Cox, in 2 B & L., 645, n.

³ Allan, 392, n. 4.

⁴ 27 W. R., 475.

⁵ *Ib.*, 199.

⁶ Allan, 398.

In both these actions the Union troops suffered greatly from the fire of Stuart's artillery, stationed on the hill before referred to, which was northwest of the scene of conflict.¹

On the other hand the Federal batteries on the east side of the Antietam poured "a severe and damaging fire" upon the Confederates,² the shot and shell passing over the heads of the Union troops.

The scene of this desperate fighting was the woods lying to the east of the turnpike³ north of the Dunker Church, the cornfield between the woods and the turnpike, and also, to a less degree, the fields and woods⁴ on the west side of the turnpike. With the exception of the hill occupied by Stuart the Confederates held now but little ground north of the Dunker Church. But the remnants of Jones's division under Grigsby, reinforced by Early, who had succeeded Lawton in the command of Ewell's division, clung obstinately to the ground south and west of the church,⁵ opposed chiefly by Greene, whose skilful management of his division of the 12th corps was conspicuous. Greene, however, was too weak⁶ to press his antagonists, and the other division of the corps, under Crawford, was resting. It was about nine o'clock. Both sides expected reinforcements, and there was for the moment a lull in the fight.

¹ 27 W. R., 56, 476.

² Jackson's Report ; 27 W. R., 956. Cf. *ib.*, 206 ; Allan, 385.

³ Often spoken of as "the East Woods."

⁴ Often spoken of as "the West Woods."

⁵ 27 W. R., 969, 970 ; Allan, 401, 402.

⁶ 27 W. R., 476.

On the Federal side, Sumner, having at last obtained his orders, was marching with his second and third divisions, under Sedgwick and French, to the scene of action.¹ He himself accompanied Sedgwick, and ordered French to follow closely, and take post on his left. Shortly after nine, Sedgwick's three brigades in three columns emerged from the belt of woods east of the turnpike, deployed, and in three lines, facing west, crossed the cornfield and the turnpike, passing Greene's troops, who heartily cheered them,² and, leaving the Dunker Church on their left, entered the woods which lay west of the turnpike. They made no halt, but pushed right on. The gallant old general (Sumner) was confident that he was about to bring upon the field of the Antietam to the soldiers of Hooker and Mansfield the timely assistance which he had so bravely carried on the field of Fair Oaks to the defeated troops of Keyes and Couch. He would not stop to ask the positions of the Union or the Confederate troops. No doubt he was impatient, not to say indignant, at having been compelled by the remissness of McClellan to waste the precious hours of the early morning. His only thought now was to press on. He must, however, one would suppose, have known that, after he should have crossed the turnpike, his left would be exposed to attack. But he threw out no skirmishers. He probably supposed that French was following *en échelon* on his left. He also, in his haste, failed to

¹ The third division, Richardson's, was detained an hour or so by order of General McClellan; 27 W. R., 275.

² *Ib.*, 476.

notice that his brigades were pressing upon each other at intervals too small to admit of their changing front in case of necessity. The distance between the lines was not over thirty paces,—some, indeed, have said, not over fifty feet.¹ His troops numbered about 5500 men. They were veterans; they had fought through the Peninsular campaign; and many of his regiments were among the best in the Army of the Potomac. They were full of confidence. In fact, they were able to overcome any resistance that could be opposed to them in their direct front, but it was soon to be seen how helpless even the finest troops are when subjected to a close and persistent flank fire, which from their formation they are powerless to return.

Just at the time when Sedgwick's division was crossing the Hagerstown road, the Confederate divisions of McLaws and Walker—eight brigades, say 6000 men—rapidly approached the scene of action from the south. Deploying to the left, and facing north, they took position behind the rocky ledges with which that region abounds. The head of Sumner's column was temporarily checked in its advance a quarter of a mile or so beyond the turnpike, partly by the difficult character of the ground and by the fences, partly by the musketry fire opened upon it in front by the remnants of Jackson's divi-

¹ Palfrey, 83. The best account of this famous charge is to be found in Palfrey's very valuable work. He participated in the action as Lieutenant-Colonel of the 20th Massachusetts, and was severely wounded. His statement, however, on page 87, that "the Philadelphia brigade" (the 2d), commanded by Howard, "was the first to go," has been denied on very high authority.

sion under Grigsby, and partly by the fire of Stuart's artillery from the high ground on the right before spoken of,¹ and, owing to the halt of the front line, the brigades were naturally getting closer to each other. At this moment the troops of McLaws and Walker poured upon their left flank at close range a terrible and sustained fire, which it was impossible for them to return. The two leading brigades were so close together that they could not change front and present a line of battle to the enemy. An attempt was made by the third line to face about, but it was frustrated by the heavy fire.² There could be but one issue to such a struggle. In spite of the heroic exertions of Sumner and Sedgwick and their brave subordinates, it was impossible to offer any effective resistance to the enemy. The loss was terrible,—over 2200 officers and men,³—and it was all sustained in a very few minutes.⁴ Sedgwick himself was three times wounded, and finally had to leave the field. The division fell back in more or less disorder perhaps a third of a mile to the north, and re-formed under the protection of the batteries.

There can be little doubt that representations made to General Sumner of the urgent need of reinforcements on this part of the field of battle influenced him greatly, and account in great part for the impetuosity of his attack. But since it was plain, when he arrived near the Dunker Church, that no fighting of any consequence was going on,⁵—that there was no

¹ 27 W. R., 310.

² *Ib.*, 275, 276, 306.

³ *Ib.*, 193.

⁴ Palfrey, 87.

⁵ 27 W. R., 476.

pressing emergency,—it is not easy to see why he should not have taken the time necessary to get his two divisions together.

It is worth remarking that this disaster to the Union army could hardly have happened if the battle had been fought on the 16th, for McLaws with his six brigades did not arrive at Sharpsburg till the morning of the 17th.

We must not fail to note the skill and resolution exhibited by General Lee in thus reinforcing his left with troops stationed originally on his right. In view of the vital importance of preventing his left from being turned, and with a correct estimate of the lack of enterprise of the Union commander who opposed his right wing (Burnside), he did not hesitate to transfer these 6000 men from one flank to the other,¹ and thus he preserved, for the time being at any rate, his line unbroken.

McLaws and Walker vigorously pressed Sedgwick's defeated troops. But they were checked by the Federal batteries, behind which their antagonists rallied and re-formed, and repulsed every attack. That these assaults were made with ill-advised persistence is shown by the great loss suffered by the Confederates,—that of McLaws's division being 39½ per cent. of the number engaged,² while the division of Walker is said to have "suffered heavily."³ Almost all this loss must have been incurred after Sedgwick's division had been flanked and broken.

¹ McLaws and Walker were originally stationed on the right of the line ; 27 W. R., 857, 858, 914.

² *Ib.*, 860.

³ *Ib.*, 917.

Farther to the south, the remnants of Jones's and Lawton's troops, after an obstinate fight, drove Greene's division from the Dunker Church across the Hagerstown turnpike by or soon after twelve o'clock. But by that time all the Confederate troops in that part of the field had sustained very heavy losses. They were in no condition to make further attacks, and indeed were not strong enough to make any effectual resistance to a vigorous and judiciously directed assault by fresh troops. They had no reserves; all their regiments had been engaged. The victory, however, remained with them. They had, with the utmost bravery, with inflexible resolution, and at a terrible sacrifice of life, repelled the three attacks on the left flank of the Confederate army.

It may well, however, be asked, Where were the two other divisions of Sumner's corps, those of French and Richardson? Why were they not at hand and engaged in this conflict? The answer is simply this,—that French, who started with Sedgwick from their bivouac near Keedysville, took his division too far to the southward, thus separating himself from Sedgwick; and so, striking, not the extreme left of the Confederate line, as was intended, but its left centre, became involved at once in a bloody and desperate conflict with the division of D. H. Hill, assisted by that of R. H. Anderson. This officer, who had been sent up by General Lee from the Confederate right to the defence of the left, naturally turned to the assistance of Hill, who was sorely pressed by French. One brigade of McLaws's division—Cobb's—also joined Hill, thereby increas-

ing his force to twelve brigades, of which, however, three, belonging to Hill's own division, had been already (in their fight with the Federal corps of Hooker and Mansfield) "broken and much demoralized,"¹ leaving perhaps 7000 men in good order and condition. On the other hand, Richardson, as soon as he obtained permission to start, moved promptly to the scene of action, and took position on French's left. The two Federal divisions numbered probably a little over 10,000 men.²

The combat which followed was beyond a question one of the most sanguinary and desperate in the whole war. Shortly after it began, the Confederates fell back to a country road, or, more properly, lane, which runs into the Hagerstown turnpike from the east about a third of a mile south of the Dunker Church, the connection between the two places being maintained by a part of Manning's brigade of J. G. Walker's division. For a considerable part of its course the level of this road is below that of the adjoining fields, so that it constitutes a sort of natural rifle-pit. This sunken road was held with the greatest tenacity by the Confederates, and it was assailed with great gallantry and persistency by the Union troops. For an hour or more their assaults were absolutely unsuccessful; but shortly after the arrival of Richardson's division they began to gain the advantage. At last, some of the Confederate regiments broke, and the sunken road thereupon became for them, and for the troops near them, a pit from which there was no escape from the deadly fire of

¹ 27 W. R., 1023.

² Allan, 420.

their antagonists on the upper bank. The carnage was awful. The road was speedily filled with the dead and wounded. To this day it is called "the Bloody Lane." At some points the Confederates were forced to surrender. Colonel Barlow of the 61st New York at one place captured several hundred men. The Confederates finally fell back in great disorder, having lost very heavily, and with their *moral* and organization much impaired.

The Union troops now held the road and the adjacent hills to the south of it. They also had suffered severely; Barlow was badly, and Richardson mortally, wounded. The casualties in the two divisions exceeded 2900 men. But their loss was greatly exceeded by that of their antagonists. In fact, "at this time, the Confederate left centre under D. H. Hill was pretty thoroughly broken up. . . . The Confederate artillery, however, kept up a vigorous fire. . . ." But "there was no body of Confederate infantry in this part of the field that could have resisted a serious advance."¹

At this moment fortune favored McClellan. The two divisions of Franklin's corps, under W. F. Smith² and Slocum, had arrived on this part of the field. A brigade of Smith's division under Irwin had checked the advance of the Confederates when they drove Greene's division across the Hagerstown turnpike. But, except for this, the 6th corps had not been engaged. Franklin at once saw the position of affairs and was anxious to put his troops in. He had with him some 10,000 or 12,000 men, under

¹ Allan, 418-420.
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² Often called "Baldy" Smith.

two division-commanders of exceptional ability; the soldiers had marched, it is true, some ten miles, from Pleasant Valley, but they were in perfectly good condition. They were veterans, well organized and well led. Such an attack as that proposed by Franklin, made upon troops exhausted as the Confederates were by several hours' hard fighting, whose losses had been enormous, who had moreover been driven, in some cases in disorder, from their original positions, was conformable to all the rules of war, and, as we know now, it could hardly have failed of complete success. But Sumner, whose three divisions had suffered so heavily, deemed it unwise to hazard these fresh troops; and McClellan, always deficient in enterprise, and undoubtedly much influenced by Sumner, would not permit any attack by Franklin's corps.¹ The contrast between the two commanders—Lee and McClellan—in vigor, skill, and enterprise, cannot be seen more plainly than by comparing this conduct of the latter with the unhesitating employment of all his available troops by the Confederate commander. McClellan had on this part of the field, in addition to Franklin's corps, the 5th corps under Porter, which had not been engaged. He also had the 1st corps under Meade and the 12th corps under Williams, besides the excellent though unfortunate troops of Sedgwick's division, and the successful divisions of French and Richardson. He had also a decided preponderance in artillery.² The 1st, 2d, and 12th corps, with the artillery, could surely, in spite of their losses and fatigues, be relied

¹ 27 W. R., 61, 62, 277.

² *Id.*, 1026.

on to hold the ground which had been gained, and also furnish any needed support to the attacking columns of the 6th corps. The 5th corps might thus remain, as before, in reserve. Had McClellan exerted himself personally, had he shown himself to the soldiers, who were all devoted to him,¹ had he called upon them for their best exertions to finish the battle, who can suppose that he would have failed? Unquestionably, the indomitable veterans of Lee's army would have fought with unabated courage and with all the strength they had left, but they would have been so largely outnumbered in men and guns, and so outfought by the fresh troops which Franklin would have put in, that the result can hardly be doubted.²

McClellan's plan of battle comprehended, as we have seen,³ an attack on the heights of Sharpsburg, on the Confederate right. Such an attack may have been a difficult one to make, for the ground was favorable for the defenders, who commanded with their batteries the bridge and the fords. But a decisive success in this part of the field might have compelled the Confederates to abandon their positions north of Sharpsburg and to concentrate on their right, in order

¹ On the enthusiasm of the Federal soldiers for McClellan, see Palfrey, 56, 119.

² To the same effect, see Palfrey, 121, 122. Colonel Allan (423) is of a different opinion; he bases it on the fact that Lee, Longstreet, and Jackson desired at that time to attack the Federal right, and would have done so had they not found themselves too weak to attempt such a task; but this seems to us only to show that the Confederate generals were bolder men than McClellan; it certainly does not tend to support the correctness of McClellan's decision.

³ *Ante*, 357.

to retain possession of Boteler's Ford, which was their only way of retreat across the Potomac. Any serious assault made at this place would very probably have deterred General Lee from sending (as he did) troops from this quarter of the field to the left of his line of battle, and we have seen that it was by these troops that at least one of the serious attacks of the Union army on his left—that made by Sumner and Sedgwick—was repulsed.

It is impossible to say whether General McClellan originally proposed that his left attack should be simultaneous with his right attack, or that it should be deferred until some palpable advantage should have been gained by the latter. His expressions are not easy to reconcile with either theory.¹ There can be little question that the two attacks ought to have been simultaneous. But while McClellan arranged for the right attack to be begun at 5.30 A.M., it was not until eight o'clock—two hours and a half after the battle had been begun by Hooker, and half an hour after McClellan had allowed Sumner to depart with the divisions of Sedgwick and French—that he ordered Burnside to carry the bridge and storm the heights of Sharpsburg.² Here was a delay, wholly unnecessary, of two hours.

General Burnside had been assigned to the com-

¹ 27 W. R., 30, 55, 63.

² Some say that no order was sent until ten o'clock. See Cox, in 2 B. & L., 647, n. One certainly was dated 9.10 A.M.; 107 W. R., 844. In his first report, McClellan gives the hour as ten; in his second, as eight; 28 W. R., 31, 63. The diary of the officer who carried the order, Lieutenant (now Brigadier-General) John M. Wilson, gives the hour as 8 A.M. See also Cox's Report, 27 W. R., 424.

mand of the right wing of the army, consisting of two corps, his own—the 9th—and Hooker's—the 1st,¹—and, as we know, Hooker had recently been removed from his control. Burnside, however, seems still to have considered himself the chief of the right wing, although he was commanding on the day of the battle only his own corps, and was on the left of the line.² He had undoubtedly been irritated at McClellan's action in this regard,³ and he showed it (among other things) by refusing to assume the personal control of his corps, which he entrusted to General Cox, of the Kanawha division.⁴ It may be doubted whether the interests of the service lost anything by the change, but when two officers command one body of troops, there is never to be seen that energy and sense of responsibility, as in cases where there is but one officer in charge.⁵ For the extraordinary delays which, as we shall see, characterized the handling of the 9th corps on this day, and which have excited the severe criticism of military historians,⁶ Burnside himself must be held principally responsible.

McClellan had sent Burnside about 7 A.M.⁷ an order to make preparations for the attack, and the troops were accordingly moved nearer the Antietam. The eight-o'clock order to attack was received about nine,

¹ *Ante*, 357.

² 27 W. R., 416.

³ There was also some feeling on his part against Hooker; *ib.*, 422. Cf. Cox, in 2 B. & L., 631. On the other hand, McClellan seems to have been quite carried away by his admiration for Hooker; 27 W. R., 219. Cf. Palfrey, 107, 108, 116, 117.

⁴ 27 W. R., 418.

⁵ Swinton, 220; Palfrey, 116–120.

⁶ Cf. Palfrey, 117.

⁷ 27 W. R., 424.

and preparations for crossing the stream were immediately made.¹ Rodman's division, accompanied by Ewing's brigade of the Kanawha division, was sent down the stream to the fords. To Sturgis's division, assisted by the other brigade, Crook's, of the Kanawha division, was assigned the task of carrying the stone bridge. Willcox's division was held in reserve. The heights on the west of the creek were occupied in force by the enemy's artillery, but only one brigade of infantry, Toombs's, of D. R. Jones's division, lined the shore. These troops, however, were so well placed and fought so well that they repelled four assaults with considerable loss to the Federal troops. During all this time no attempt was made to ford the stream. About 1 P.M., however, the bridge was carried; Crook crossed at a ford above the bridge; Toombs retired on his supports, and, about the same time, Rodman and Ewing, having crossed by the lower fords, came up and connected with Sturgis's troops on the west bank. These latter were now withdrawn on the ground of fatigue, and replaced by Willcox's division. While these arrangements were being made, Burnside himself came down to the creek, actually crossed it, remained a short time with his troops, and then returned to his position on the eastern side.² It was not till about three o'clock that Cox got his corps ready for the assault on the heights. When it was made it was a brilliant success; the Confederate infantry were broken and driven into the town, a battery (McIntosh's)

¹ Cox's Report, 27 W. R., 424.

² Cox, in 2 B. & L., 653.

was captured, and a complete victory seemed within sight. But this was not to be.

It was one of the peculiar features of General McClellan's conduct of this battle, that he put his cavalry in the centre of his line, instead of on his flanks, and it was the more extraordinary that he should have made this disposition of his horse in this battle because he had every reason to expect that his antagonist would be reinforced by troops marching from Harper's Ferry on the south side of the Potomac, of whose approach notice could at least be given by the cavalry, even if their onward march could not be hindered by its operations. But so it was; the Union army had no cavalry on its left; and just as the gallant 9th corps, after all the delays of the morning, was about closing in upon its adversary—when, to all appearance, another half-hour would have given it the possession of the town of Sharpsburg, and decided the fortune of the whole battle—the Confederate “light division,” consisting of five brigades¹ under A. P. Hill, having just arrived from Harper's Ferry and crossed the Potomac without molestation, climbed the heights south of the town. Without an instant's hesitation they rushed to the rescue of their comrades. Attacking Cox's troops in flank as they were eagerly pressing their advantage over Jones's defeated and disorganized soldiers, Hill's men broke several of the Union brigades, rendered imperative a complete re-formation of the Federal line, recaptured McIntosh's battery, and finally forced their antagonists to retire in more or

¹ One brigade, Thomas's, had been left at Harper's Ferry.

less disorder to the neighborhood of the bridge, where they bivouacked for the night.¹ This ended the battle.

The battle of Sharpsburg, or of the Antietam, was one of the bloodiest battles of the war, and it is likely that more men were killed and wounded on that 17th of September than on any single day in the whole war. The Confederate loss "probably amounted to 8000 men or more"²; that of the Union army is given at 12,410 men.³ Each side lost about one quarter of the troops engaged; for the Confederate infantry, in which were nearly all the casualties, did not exceed 31,200 men⁴ or thereabouts, while the 1st, 2d, 9th, and 12th corps, which were the only troops put in by McClellan—as is shown by the losses in the 5th and 6th corps and the cavalry division, which amounted to only 578 men⁵—numbered about 46,000 men.⁶

To get a correct idea of the management of the

¹ 27 W. R., 423, 886, 890, 981.

² Allan, 438. The Confederate summary (27 W. R., 813) includes the losses at South Mountain, Crampton's Gap, and Sharpsburg. This summary gives the total number of killed as 1567, and is wholly irreconcilable with the statement of Major Davis of the Army of the Potomac, who reported that he buried about 3000 of Lee's army. 27 W. R., 181.

³ 27 W. R., 200.

⁴ Allowing, that is, 800 men to each of the 39 brigades. The cavalry and artillery, 8000 strong, brought up Lee's total strength to 39,200. Cf. Palfrey, 68; Swinton, 209 *et seq.*

⁵ 27 W. R., 200.

⁶ The nominal strength of these corps, as given by McClellan (27 W. R., 67), is 57,614, from which about 20 per cent. should be deducted for "extra duty" men, etc. See Palfrey, 70. Colonel Allan (398) puts the strength of the 1st and 12th corps, including artillery, at 18,000 to 19,000 men, which is only 76 per cent. of the number given by McClellan in 27 W. R., 67. But he here deducts the loss of the 1st corps at South Mountain.

battle, however, all the troops within reach on both sides should be included. Adding the Confederate cavalry and artillery to their infantry, therefore, we have a total of 39,200 men¹; and adding the 5th and 6th corps and the cavalry and artillery² to the 46,000 Federal troops already enumerated, we arrive at a total of about 70,000 men. The battle of Sharpsburg was therefore in every light most creditable to General Lee and his army; whether we regard his 31,200 infantry as contending with the Federal 46,000 infantry, or whether we admire his intrepidity in standing to fight an army of 70,000 with less than 40,000 men, not all of whom, in fact, were with him at the commencement of the action. Of General Lee's management of the battle there is nothing but praise to be said. Nor could any troops have more fully justified the reliance which their leader placed on them than the troops of the Army of Northern Virginia. Lee, in fact, intended to try his men again. He was urged by both Longstreet and Jackson to recross the Potomac that night, but he refused, and, instead, he endeavored to arrange for an attack on the Federal right wing the next day.³ But this was found to be absolutely out of the question, and the Confederate army had to be content with remaining in its lines and awaiting the action of the Federal general.

¹ See note 2, at the end of this chapter.

² The numbers of the 5th and 6th corps and the cavalry division are given by McClellan (27 W. R., 67) at 29,550, 80 per cent. of which is 23,640. The artillery seems to have been included in the corps.

³ General Stephen D. Lee, in the *Richmond Despatch*, December 20, 1862; White's *Lee*, 224; Palfrey, 123.

McClellan (as we have just seen) had some 24,000 troops who had not been seriously engaged on the 17th. Early in the morning of the 18th,¹ Couch brought up his division (nominally) 7218 strong,² and, by 11 A.M.,³ Humphreys arrived with his division of 6000 men.⁴ Franklin again strongly advised an attack. He was the only one of the Union corps-commanders who recognized the importance of the high ground held by Stuart,⁵ and he desired to begin by driving him and his artillery from it.⁶ He would thus have placed his troops on the extreme left of the Confederate line.⁷ But McClellan decided not to renew the battle. We have little to add to the considerations presented above, save to say, that the 12,000 fresh troops of Couch and Humphreys far outweighed any accession to the fighting strength of the Confederate army which General Lee could possibly have received from the return of stragglers. That McClellan had everything to gain and nothing to lose by renewing the battle seems to us very plain, nor can we bring ourselves to entertain a reasonable doubt as to the result, if he had recommenced the fight.⁸

On the night of the 18th of September, Lee recrossed the Potomac at Boteler's Ford, just south of Sharpsburg. He had lost "13 guns, 39 colors, upwards of 15,000 stand of small arms, and more than 6000

¹ 27 W. R., 377.

² 28 W. R., 336. In reality, it was probably about 5800 or 6000 strong.

³ 107 W. R., 1005.

⁴ 27 W. R., 373.

⁶ 2 B. & L., 597.

⁵ *Ante*, 354, n. 2.

⁷ 27 W. R., 957.

⁸ So, Palfrey, 127; Swinton, 223; *contra*, Allan, 443.

prisoners." The Federal army had not lost a gun or a color.¹

These losses were severely felt by the Confederates, especially as nothing but glory had been gained by fighting the battle of Sharpsburg.² This they unquestionably had won ; but at what fearful risks ! Of several of these we have already spoken. But we cannot refrain from calling attention to those of the afternoon of the battle. What right had General Lee to count upon the extraordinary delay of the 9th corps in crossing the Antietam, where there were two or three fords besides the bridge, and over three hours were consumed in making the transit ? Or upon the further delay of two more hours occasioned by confining the passage of Willcox's division to the bridge only ? Had the 9th corps accomplished by noon, as it certainly might have done, what it had accomplished by the time A. P. Hill arrived, Lee in all probability would have lost the battle. As it was, fortune favored him ; he repulsed all the attacks of his foes, and made good his retreat across the river. But the prestige of victory remained naturally with McClellan, who after a few weeks followed the Confederates into Virginia.³ Lee's invasion had terminated in failure—failure which could not but be admitted by the authorities and people of the South.

¹ McClellan's Report, 27 W. R., 67. For the condition of the Confederate army after the battle, see 2 Henderson, 322-324.

² Cf. 2 Henderson, 340 *et seq.*

³ Sumner's corps occupied Harper's Ferry and Bolivar Heights on September 22d ; 27 W. R., 71.

NOTES TO CHAPTER III.

1. (P. 355.) No field-intrenchments of any kind were used at the battle of the Antietam (or Sharpsburg); and this is remarkable, in view of the fact that their construction would have been of infinite service to the Confederates. In a lecture on "Hasty Intrenchments" recently delivered before the Military Historical Society of Massachusetts, Major (now Lieutenant-Colonel) Arthur L. Wagner, speaking of the intrenchments thrown up by Fitz-John Porter at Gaines's Mill, says:

"Hasty intrenchments in the true sense of the term had at last made their appearance. Porter's slight barricades were, it is true, quite insignificant when compared with the works quickly constructed by the opposing armies on the same ground two years later, but they were the germ of the works so universally found on American battle-fields in the later stages of the war. But though the value of hasty intrenchments would have been great in the succeeding battles of the Change of Base, and though the Army of the Potomac, in its retreating conflicts, made use of rail fences and the accidental shelter of the ground, the lesson of hasty fortifications had not been learned, for at the second battle of Bull Run we find both armies fighting desperately without

availing themselves of the powerful auxiliary that could have been so readily found in hasty intrenchments. Yet this very battle gave a striking object-lesson in this respect which doubtless sank deep into the memory of officers and men. At Groveton, on the first day of the battle, Jackson's main line rested on the excavation of an unfinished railroad, which constituted virtually the best kind of ready-made intrenchments, and the most determined attacks on the part of the Federal troops were unable to carry it.

"It would seem that the value of this lesson would have been so apparent to the Confederates that their next defensive battle (Sharpsburg) would find them resorting largely to the use of hasty intrenchments; but little use seems to have been made by them of any shelter except that afforded by the accidents of the *terrain*. On the Confederate left a part of the line was protected by a sunken road, a wood in which were outcroppings of limestone, affording welcome shelter, a stone wall, and (some authorities say) a breastwork of rails. But, in the main, the Confederate line was unsheltered by natural cover, and Lee neglected the aid of intrenchments in a struggle in which he was forced to play the part of a Wellington without a Blücher, but in which, fortunately for him, he was not opposed by a Napoleon." ¹

2. (P. 377.) The estimate given in the text of the strength of the Confederate army at the battle

¹ *Journal of the Military Service Institution* March, 1898 (p. 230). Governor's Island, N. Y. H.

of Sharpsburg is not put forward as reconciling the very conflicting data on the subject, for they are irreconcilable. The following figures are given in the Confederate reports, *viz.* :

27 W. R.,	860 : McLaws	4 brigades	2,893 men.
" "	886 : D. R. Jones	6 "	2,430 "
" "	919 : Ransom	1 brigade	1,600 "
" "	929 : Wofford	1 "	854 "
" "	973 : Early	4 brigades	3,500 "
" "	981 : A. P. Hill	3 "	2,000 "
" "	1008 : J. R. Jones	4 "	1,600 "
" "	1022 : D. H. Hill	5 "	3,000 "
" "	1023 : R. H. Anderson	6 "	4,000 "
In all		34 "	21,877 "

This gives only 643 men to a brigade.

As these reports were—most of them—written long after the battle, their statements should no doubt be taken with some allowance, and in estimating 800 men to a brigade, it was attempted to make such allowance.

But in the official statement of the strength of the Confederate army on September 22, 1862,¹—five days after the battle,—we find the number of those then present for duty in the infantry alone given as 36,418. To these must be added the cavalry and reserve artillery, as also those killed, wounded, and captured in the battle.² The cavalry and reserve artillery numbered about 8000³; and the killed and wounded about 8000 more.⁴ Here we have upwards

¹ 28 W. R., 621.

² *Ante*, 337, n. 5.

³ Allan, 380.

⁴ *Ib.*, 438.

of 52,000 men, exclusive of prisoners, the number of whom General McClellan estimated at 6000,¹—making a total of 58,000 men present for duty on the morning of the battle. The only deduction that can be made from this sum besides Thomas's brigade, which was not in the action,—say 800 men,—is the number of stragglers who had joined their comrades after the battle; but on September 22d certainly the army had not in the opinion of General Lee been augmented from this cause.²

We must leave these contradictory statements to be reconciled by others. We have thought best in the text to adopt substantially the numbers given in the Confederate reports, though most of them were written long after the battle. We desire to call attention in this Note to the fact that the Return of September 22, 1862, would warrant a much larger estimate of the size of General Lee's army. Still, it seems hard to believe that the recollections of so many officers can have been so far out of the way.

¹ 27 W. R., 67, 161.

² See Lee to Davis; 27 W. R., 143.





CHAPTER IV.

BRAGG TAKES THE OFFENSIVE IN THE WEST.¹

GENERAL HALLECK, as we have said above,² made, after the fall of Corinth, the terrible mistake of dispersing his army of over 100,000 men.³ His plain military duty was closely to follow up the greatly inferior army of Beauregard,⁴ and to force it either to fight in the open, or to take shelter in Vicksburg, where, sooner or later, it would have been forced to capitulate. But instead of attempting this, Halleck remained at Corinth, and undertook the impracticable task of repairing and maintaining in running order the railroads connecting Columbus with Corinth and Memphis with Chattanooga. He sent one division (Wallace's) to reinforce Curtis in Arkansas. He seems to have deluded himself with the idea that the weather was too hot for a summer campaign in Mississippi.⁵ He had, however, to meet the renewed demand from Washington that the movement on East Tennessee, which had been, as we know,⁶ in-

¹ See Map XI., facing page 414.

² *Ante*, 95, 218.

³ Greene, 29; 11 W. R., 235.

⁴ Consisting, on its arrival at Tupelo, of 45,365 "effective" men; 11 W. R., 604.

⁵ 23 W. R., 62; *cf.* Greene, 31-34.

⁶ *Ante*, 11.

interrupted by the expedition against Forts Henry and Donelson, should now be taken up again. To this movement, as we have seen, President Lincoln had always attached an importance far in excess of its real consequence, if the matter be considered from a purely military standpoint¹; his sympathies were excited by the sufferings of the Unionists in that region, and he also deemed it very desirable that the United States Government should show itself capable of affording succor to those who claimed its support. At the time of which we are now writing it was certainly possible—if the Confederate Western army would be content to remain in Mississippi—to send a considerable Union force into East Tennessee and occupy it; and General Halleck ordered Buell, who had, since the fall of Corinth, resumed the command of the Army of the Ohio,² to proceed to Chattanooga. He, however, coupled this task with another, that of rebuilding and repairing, as Buell proceeded towards Chattanooga, the Memphis and Charleston railroad, on which he was ordered to depend for his supplies. Nothing which Halleck ever did in his life shows more distinctly his inability to grasp a military problem than this attempt of his to maintain as a line of supplies for an invading army a railroad which ran on the boundary between the territory which had just been conquered and the hostile region south of it, and which was therefore exposed to interruption in every mile of its course by the active and daring troopers in the Confederate

¹ 10 W. R., 671; 23 W. R., 8, 75.

² 23 W. R., 1.

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service.¹ Buell, from time to time, remonstrated against this course, but Halleck for several weeks insisted upon it.²

The remainder of Halleck's army, except the division of Wallace, which, as we have said, was sent to Arkansas, numbered about 65,000 men, and was stationed by him at various points between Memphis in Tennessee and Decatur in Alabama. It consisted of the Army of the Tennessee, of which General Grant now assumed the command, and the Army of the Mississippi, of which for a few days General Pope retook the charge, until he was ordered to Virginia, when his place was filled by General Rosecrans. Memphis was occupied in force by General Sherman. General Halleck fixed his own headquarters at Corinth, and remained there until the early part of July, when he, too, was ordered to Washington. Grant then assumed command of the two armies of the Tennessee and the Mississippi. He, like Buell, found it impracticable to maintain communication with Memphis over the Memphis and Charleston railroad,³ and relied for his supplies on the Mobile and Ohio railroad, which ran from Columbus in Kentucky through Jackson to Corinth, and which was in order as far south as Rienzi in Mississippi, and on the Central Mississippi railroad, which ran from Jackson to Bolivar, in Tennessee.⁴ It was difficult enough to protect these lines of railroad, but as they

¹ 22 W. R., 30, 31; 23 W. R., 27, 33, 44, 58, 76, 78. See also Greene, 33; 1 Grant, 383, 401; *cf.* 110 W. R., 330, 331.

² 23 W. R., 33, 44.

³ 1 Grant, 396; 25 W. R., 36, 41, 47.

⁴ 1 Grant, 395.

ran back directly from the front of the army, it was not impossible to concentrate troops in a short time for the defence of any threatened point.

The force thus retained by Halleck and left by him in charge of Grant was not strong enough to undertake offensive operations against the army which Beauregard and Bragg kept at Tupelo until the last week of July, or even against the forces of Price and Van Dorn, which took the place of that army, when it was sent to Chattanooga; and Grant was even called upon later to send two of his divisions to the assistance of Buell. These troops of Grant's were therefore practically useless during the whole summer. Halleck's only offensive operation was that which Buell was ordered to make with about one third of the army which captured Corinth; and the result of Halleck's refusal to follow up and destroy Beauregard's army as soon as the latter had evacuated Corinth was to stalemate the larger portion of his own army, and to entrust to the smaller fraction of it a task which he gave his antagonist ample opportunity to defeat.

General Buell, after receiving his orders from General Halleck, started out on his campaign about the 10th or 12th of June. He had with him the four divisions of McCook, Nelson, Crittenden, and Wood. His first division, under Thomas, was not allowed to join him until the latter part of July. A division under Mitchel, which had been for some weeks overrunning the country between Corinth and Chattanooga, was charged with rebuilding bridges, and generally with preparing the way for the ad-

vance of the main body. The division of G. W. Morgan, composed, in great part, of refugees from East Tennessee, which, at President Lincoln's earnest desire, had been sent by Buell in the spring to occupy Cumberland Gap in Kentucky,¹ with the view of opening and guarding that route into East Tennessee, was at this time on the point of seizing that important post, and it was General Buell's intention at the proper time to combine in some way his own movements with those of Morgan. Had Buell been given his whole army at the outset, and ordered to move on Chattanooga with all despatch, his campaign would have had a good chance of success²; but, compelled, as he was, to repair the Memphis and Charleston railroad as he went along,—thereby giving his enemy not only explicit notice of his intentions, but ample time to meet him, wherever and whenever they might choose, with superior forces,—his enterprise was from the first doomed to defeat. The four divisions with which he moved out numbered between 20,000 and 25,000 men³; Thomas, in the first days of August,⁴ brought him some 6000 more. These troops comprised the whole of Buell's active army. From Athens, Alabama, where in the last days of June he collected three of his divisions together,⁵ to Chattanooga, is about 150 miles.

The Confederate army of the West had, as we have seen, about the first of June, retired from Corinth to Tupelo, Mississippi. Here it remained for nearly

¹ 22 W. R., 28.

² This was General Grant's opinion; 1 Grant, 383, 401.

³ 23 W. R., 5.

⁴ 22 W. R., 707.

⁵ *Id.*, 31.

two months, recruiting its numbers, resting after the labors of the previous campaign, improving in health and strength, and progressing rapidly in discipline, organization, and instruction.¹ On June 27th Bragg formally succeeded Beauregard,² whose health had broken down, in command of the Western Department. In view of the threatening movements of the Federal general, Mitchel, who had occupied Battle Creek, where the stream of that name flows into the Tennessee River a few miles north of Bridgeport, and in response to the urgent request of General E. Kirby Smith, who commanded the Confederate Department of East Tennessee, Bragg, on June 27th, sent McCown's division to Chattanooga, for the defence of that post,³ but he retained the rest of his army at Tupelo until the latter part of July.

During the months of June and July, however, Buell was in no condition to take advantage of the immobility of the Confederate forces. The country between Corinth and Chattanooga did not afford sufficient food for the subsistence of his army, and he was obliged to rely on the railroads for his supplies. The month of June was consumed in the futile attempt to put the Memphis and Charleston railroad in condition to furnish these supplies. But on the 30th of June, when the road had been completed only as far as Decatur, Halleck recognized that Buell had better rely on the railroad which ran from Nashville⁴ through Murfreesborough to Stevenson, and thence to Bridgeport and Chattanooga. Halleck himself had,

¹ 22 W. R., 1089.

² 25 W. R., 626.

³ 22 W. R., 1088; 23 W. R., 709, 710.

⁴ 23 W. R., 75, 76.

about this time, ceased attempting to use the Memphis and Charleston railroad between the former place and Corinth.¹ For the loss of the last three weeks in June, Buell was in nowise responsible. Had his suggestions been adopted he might have completed during this time the Nashville and Chattanooga railroad.

Mitchel's division had been, however, set to work upon this road, as well as upon the Nashville and Decatur railroad, and about July 1st, Buell felt so far assured of his supplies that he ordered the divisions of McCook and Crittenden to Battle Creek in the first week of July.² On the 12th the road from Nashville was opened as far as Decherd, and Nelson's division was at work on the line running south from Decherd to Stevenson. One division of Buell's army—Wood's—was, it is true, yet at Athens, working on the Memphis and Charleston railway, for the idea of using that road for supplying the forces had not then been absolutely abandoned.³ Still there would have been no difficulty in collecting the four divisions at Stevenson, and thence moving, by way of Bridgeport, on Chattanooga, which, as we have seen, was occupied at that moment only by the single division of McCown.

But on the 13th of July, a Confederate cavalry force of some 1400 men, under the famous Forrest, suddenly descended on Murfreesborough, a station on the Nashville and Chattanooga railroad, and, meeting with no effective or even creditable resistance from the garrison, captured the post with more than

¹ 23 W. R., 93.

² 22 W. R., 33.

³ *Ib.*, 33.

1000 officers and men,¹ and broke up the railroad so thoroughly that it was not repaired till the 28th of the month. This interruption of Buell's railroad communications necessarily postponed for the moment any advance on his part, while it gave to his opponent time to concert a scheme of invasion of the States of Tennessee and Kentucky, of which he took ample advantage.

There were many reasons which at this time urged the Confederate authorities to adopt this scheme. In the first place it was eminently desirable to prevent the United States forces from seizing Chattanooga, occupying the principal places in East Tennessee, organizing the Unionists of that region, and severing the railroad communications between Virginia and Georgia. These results once accomplished, the entire States of Kentucky and Tennessee would be irrecoverably lost to the Confederate cause. In the next place, not only was the population of middle and western Tennessee strongly opposed to the Union, but it was believed that a large part of Kentucky was full of sympathizers with the Confederates. The two States had very recently been overrun by the Northern armies, and there was reason to think that if the presence of these armies could be removed, they might, both of them, cast in their lot with their Southern neighbors.

The military situation also invited an invasion. The Union armies were not living on the products of the regions occupied by them,—they relied for everything on the supplies furnished them by the

¹ 22 W. R., 792 *et seq.*

railroads, which conveyed to convenient points the food and forage brought from the fertile regions of the North and West. The base of supplies for the army under Grant was, as we have seen, Columbus in Kentucky¹; but with this line of supplies Bragg did not propose to interfere. The primary base of the army of Buell was Louisville, Kentucky, the secondary base was Nashville, Tennessee, and it was the long line of railroad running from Louisville to Nashville and thence to Bridgeport, Alabama, which it was needful to maintain in unimpaired efficiency if Buell was to seize Chattanooga and advance into East Tennessee. For the interruption, or perhaps even the temporary destruction, of these railroad communications the Confederate general relied on the skill and boldness of his two famous cavalry commanders, Forrest and Morgan, both exceptionally brilliant leaders, and the former, Forrest, possessing in large measure the high qualities of a great general. The troops which they commanded were in every way fitted for the perilous, exhausting, and dangerous work involved in these cavalry-raids; better horsemen, more capable soldiers, could not be found anywhere than those who constituted these commands. The nature of the service demanded from these troops was also precisely in accordance with the principles which ought to regulate operations of this kind. Cavalry-raids like these, made in a friendly country, upon the communications of a hostile army which has advanced far into this country, are justifiable on the plainest principles of war.

¹ *Ante*, 386.

fare, and ought always to be distinguished from those cavalry-raids which are made in a hostile territory, and are intended either to intimidate and harass its inhabitants, or to cut the communications of a hostile army operating in its own country. The raids of Morgan and Forrest were of the first description, and were eminently useful to the Confederates; that of Stuart¹ in Pennsylvania, in October of this year, and that of Stoneman in Virginia, in March, 1863, were of the second kind, were attended with great risk to the troops employed, and were of no benefit to the operations of the generals² who ordered them to be made. The distinction which we have drawn above, between these two classes of cavalry-raids, we regard as fundamental, and of the greatest importance. We shall hereafter have occasion to recur to it frequently.

General Kirby Smith, who commanded the Department of East Tennessee, seems to have taken a clear and comprehensive view of the whole situation. He saw that East Tennessee would in all probability be lost to the Confederates unless Bragg should bring the greater part of his army promptly to Chattanooga. He wrote to this effect to President Davis on July 14th,³ and to Bragg on the 19th and 20th.⁴ Then on the 24th⁵ he wrote Bragg a long letter, in which he opened the project of an offensive campaign. He urged him to bring the main body of his army to East Tennessee and to take command in

¹ *Post.*, 438.

² Lee in one case, and Hooker in the other.

³ 23 W. R., 726.

⁴ *Ib.*, 730.

⁵ *Ib.*, 734.

person of all the forces. He offered cheerfully to serve under him. He pointed out that there was "yet time for a brilliant summer campaign," with "every prospect of regaining possession of Middle Tennessee and, possibly, Kentucky." He stated his own force to be about 18,000 men, half of which was, however, opposed by the Federal general, Morgan, at and near Cumberland Gap.

But Bragg had already (on July 21st) issued his orders for the movement.¹ His infantry he sent by rail *via* Mobile, and it arrived at Chattanooga shortly after the 1st of August. His cavalry and artillery, being compelled to march for the greater part of the distance over the hilly country of northern Alabama and Georgia, were some time longer in completing their movement. On the 31st of July he had a conference at Chattanooga with Kirby Smith,² who came from Knoxville for the purpose, and the two generals arranged their measures. Their expectation was that Smith would be able to dispose in some way of Morgan's force in Cumberland Gap, and that then the entire Confederate army would be "thrown into Middle Tennessee, with the fairest prospect of cutting off General Buell," should he continue in his then position.

Buell's forces at that time were menacing Chattanooga; his own headquarters were at Huntsville, Alabama³; Wood's division was at Decherd, Tennessee⁴; Nelson's was at Murfreesborough⁵; Mc-

¹ 23 W. R., 731; 110 W. R., 330, 331.

² 23 W. R., 741.

³ *Ib.*, 236.

⁴ *Ib.*, 238.

⁵ *Ib.*, 234.

Cook's and Crittenden's were at Battle Creek¹; Thomas's was still in the rear at Athens, Alabama.² Buell had learned of the arrival of Bragg and of some of his troops at Chattanooga,³ and fully expected to find the place occupied in force.⁴ He was now—so he, on the 6th of August, wrote to Halleck, then in Washington and General-in-Chief of all the armies—"concentrating his troops again," *i. e.*, for an advance on Chattanooga. The next day he wrote a fuller letter to Halleck,⁵ giving the strength of his movable column at from 31,000 to 36,000 men, that of his garrisons and railway-guards (exclusive of Morgan's division at Cumberland Gap) at 15,000 men, that of the Confederates under Kirby Smith at about 15,000, and that of the troops which Bragg had recently brought from Tupelo at about 30,000. These estimates were substantially correct. To these last he thought Bragg had added some 15,000 to 20,000 new troops; but here he was mistaken. In this letter he reiterated his intention of marching at once on Chattanooga, unless he should "ascertain certainly that the enemy's strength rendered it imprudent"⁶; and on the 12th of August he sent to General Grant for the two divisions for which Halleck had authorized him to call in case of emergency.⁷

But, on the 12th of August, before Buell could organize his forces for an advance—in fact, within

¹ 23 W. R., 239.

⁴ *Ib.*, 266.

² *Ib.*, 237.

⁵ *Ib.*, 278.

³ *Ib.*, 236.

⁶ *Cf.* Buell's Statement; 22 W. R., 35, 36.

⁷ 23 W. R., 286, 315, 316.

a week after he had written his long letter to Halleck—the Confederate general, Morgan, captured the town of Gallatin on the Louisville and Nashville railroad, a few miles north of the latter place, destroyed the tunnel near the town, and effectually broke up this line of communication.¹ This was the most serious of all the attempts made by the Confederate cavalry at this time to break up the communications of the Union armies in Kentucky and Tennessee. But the Southern troopers and guerrillas were raiding constantly and freely throughout these States, and causing infinite trouble to the Federal commanders. A sort of epidemic of panic seems to have prevailed among the Union officers commanding detached posts, and many of them surrendered their commands with little or no resistance.² Moreover, reports of the probability of an invasion of the two States by the Confederate armies under Bragg and Kirby Smith were at this time more and more frequent and authoritative. Towards the last of August, General Buell found himself obliged to renounce his project of an advance on Chattanooga, and to devote his entire attention to the task of meeting and repelling the invasion of his Department by his antagonists.³

The arrangements incident to the change of base which General Bragg had made from Tupelo to Chattanooga consumed some three weeks, so that he was prevented from beginning his advance until late

¹ 22 W. R., 857.

² Cist, ch. 4; 1 Van Horne, 145 *et seq.*

³ 22 W. R., 36, 37.

in August. His movement was to be made into Tennessee contemporaneously with that of Kirby Smith into Kentucky. Bragg had sent Smith, whose headquarters were at Knoxville, McCown's division and other troops, thereby increasing the strength of Smith's column to about 20,000 men. Bragg's original intention was to operate in middle Tennessee, and he appears to have held to this intention as late as the 24th of August.¹ But the confidence exhibited by Smith as to the political results of an invasion of Kentucky soon began to influence Bragg's mind, and, as we shall see later on, Bragg ended by practically subordinating the military management of his campaign to political projects.

Of the projects—political or military—of his adversary, General Buell had, of course, no direct information. He was at first inclined to think that Bragg's object was to recover middle Tennessee, and in this, as we have seen, he was right. Buell had a difficult part to play, for the territory which it was plain was to be invaded had no actual boundaries that Buell could make use of, and it extended from the Ohio to the Tennessee. One thing only was clear, and that was, that for Buell to retain his hold on middle and southern Tennessee, it was absolutely necessary for him to defend Nashville, his secondary base.² But while Bragg might threaten an advance on Nashville, and so detain Buell in its vicinity, it was perfectly possible for him, by making this movement a feint, to reach some point on the railroad north of Nashville, such as Bowling Green

¹ 23 W. R., 775.

² Cf. 22 W. R., 712, 713.

or Munfordville, or even to march directly on Louisville. And Buell's deficiency in cavalry, which he had again and again applied to the Government to remedy, but in vain, placed him at a great disadvantage in securing information of his enemy's movements.¹

The Confederate commanders also had their difficulties, chief among which was want of provisions and forage, in both of which the country which they had to traverse was lacking. Then there were no railroads or rivers on which they could depend for transportation. They had to rely solely on the country roads, which were often very poor. These were circumstances which, it will be remembered,² had always rendered it difficult for the Federals to invade East Tennessee, and which now made it difficult for the Confederates to invade middle Tennessee and Kentucky from East Tennessee. Thus we find Kirby Smith writing from Barboursville, Kentucky, on the 20th of August,³ that the country around that place had been "almost completely drained of all kinds of supplies," and that the roads were "much worse than" he "had supposed." Bragg's march, moreover, presented peculiarly trying features. He had to cross the river Tennessee, which runs in this region in a southwesterly direction from its source to Chattanooga; then to traverse Walden's Ridge, a range of heights parallel with the course of the river, and some 1200 feet above the level of the sea; then to descend into the valley

¹ 11 W. R., 183; 23 W. R., 202.

² Part I., 192, 193.

³ 23 W. R., 766.

of the Sequatchie River, a stream running south-westerly into the Tennessee and parallel with it; and then to ascend the plateau of the Cumberland Mountains, somewhere about 2200 feet above the sea-level, before he could possibly concentrate his army for the invasion proper. And during all these operations, all supplies had to be carried in wagons.

The Confederate generals, however, were at first most successful. Kirby Smith, on the right, having a force much superior to that of the Federal general who occupied Cumberland Gap, passed through the mountains about the middle of August by other roads, and possessed himself of Morgan's line of supply.¹ Leaving one of his divisions under Stevenson to watch Morgan, Smith pressed forward into Kentucky, and on August 30th encountered an extemporized force of Federal troops near Richmond, and routed them with great loss.² On September 2d, he was in possession of Lexington, and he established his headquarters there. Bragg, too, effected his movement through the Sequatchie Valley and his crossing of the Cumberland Plateau in the first days of September, and on the 5th established his headquarters at Sparta.³ From this point he could march either west on Murfreesborough or Nashville, or northwest on Carthage and Bowling Green. He could also, if he chose, push rapidly almost due

¹ 22 W. R., 992. Morgan maintained himself a month at Cumberland Gap, and then, not being relieved, and being short of provisions, skilfully retreated without loss to the Ohio River.

² *Ib.*, 931 *et seq.*

³ 23 W. R., 796.

north, in the direction of Louisville, *via* Glasgow and Munfordville.

Up to this point Bragg's movements had been screened by the Cumberland Mountains,¹ and Buell could not obtain any definite information respecting them; and, as we have just pointed out, it was in Bragg's power to take his choice of routes after arriving at Sparta. Buell, it is true, might have forestalled any direct movement of his adversary into Kentucky by concentrating at Sparta; but in that case he would run the risk of Bragg's turning his right, marching by way of Altamont and McMinnville, and cutting him off from Nashville. On the whole, Buell decided to concentrate his scattered forces at Murfreesborough, where his army would cover Nashville, and where he could easily receive the expected reinforcements from Grant's army in western Tennessee. This he accomplished by September 5th. His plan, as stated by himself in a letter to Halleck of the 2d,² was, after leaving a sufficient force to defend Nashville, to move rapidly into Kentucky. He had then heard of Kirby Smith's victory at Richmond,³ and he strongly suspected that Bragg was intending to effect a junction with him. There was danger of a Confederate rising in Kentucky, and it was far from unlikely that Louisville might be carried by a *coup-de-main*, in which case the cause of the Union would receive a serious blow. At all events, to march into Kentucky with the great body of his army was clearly the step for General Buell to take.

¹ 23 W. R., 470.

² *Ib.*, 470.

³ *Ib.*, 462.

Buell's movements would doubtless have been somewhat more expeditious had it not been that, in addition to the delay involved in the concentration of his widely separated divisions, and in making the military arrangements necessary for the defence of Nashville, he was obliged to satisfy, so far at least as his view of the military situation permitted him to do so, the demands of the Military Governor of Tennessee, Andrew Johnson, a functionary whom President Lincoln, soon after the capture of Fort Donelson, had unnecessarily and very injudiciously appointed. There was no duty which such a functionary could possibly perform in time of war which could not be more fitly performed by the ranking military officer in the Department; and to introduce a civilian, with undefined and undefinable powers, into a territory, the control of which was still being disputed by armies, was to add unnecessarily an element of difficulty to the already difficult task of the military authorities. Mr. Johnson was a sturdy and thorough-going Unionist, a well known politician of East Tennessee, but he was wholly ignorant of military matters, and his views were often in conflict with those of the generals in command.¹

On the 14th of September Buell was at Bowling Green with the bulk of his army.² Bragg, however, had reached Glasgow,³ a town about thirty miles east of Bowling Green, on the day before, and on the

¹ 11 W. R., 79, 126, 128, 129, 139; 22 W. R., 697, 698; 23 W. R., 36, 48, 72, 119, 122, 516, *etc.*

² 23 W. R., 515.

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³ 22 W. R., 1090.

14th his advance attacked the Federal post at Munfordville, eighteen miles north of Glasgow, and a station on the Louisville and Nashville railroad. The attack was repulsed, but Bragg at once brought up his main army, and the Federal commander, on being satisfied that he was largely outnumbered, surrendered on the 17th with over 4000 men.¹ Buell was severely censured for not preventing this catastrophe, but the Military Commission, which was afterwards convened to investigate his operations in this campaign, acquitted him of all blame. He was not aware that the post was in any danger,—the garrison being large and the position being a strong one; and he was, in fact, marching on Glasgow to attack Bragg, when Munfordville was surrendered.²

By occupying Munfordville, Bragg had thrown his army between that of Buell and Louisville. It would therefore certainly seem that this was the place for him to attack Buell, if he intended to fight him at all. It must have been plain to any one at the time, one would think, that Buell was marching to the relief of Louisville, and that he could not get there unless he could defeat Bragg, or unless Bragg should move off, and allow him to pursue his march unmolested. Bragg, it is true, could not remain in his present position for more than a few days, for he was short of supplies³; but he could send for Kirby Smith, who was perhaps a hundred miles away, at Lexington, and who could not only bring him 10,000 men, but plenty of provisions,

¹ 23 W. R., 523, 524, 538, 542.

² 22 W. R., 9, 10, 48.

³ *Id.*, 1090.

and who, although an independent Department-commander, had offered to serve under Bragg in this campaign. Still, the fact that Bragg was not the sole commander in this region unquestionably hampered his movements. It was another instance of the folly, which both the Union and the Confederate Governments were so constantly committing, of having more than one commanding officer in one theatre of war.¹ Smith was not summoned, and Bragg did not feel himself strong enough to attack Buell alone. He contented himself with offering battle to Buell for a few days, but Buell, who clearly saw the paramount importance of reaching Louisville with an unbeaten army, did not accept his offer. On the 21st² Bragg marched off to Bardstown, to make connection with Kirby Smith; and Buell, the road to Louisville being now open, proceeded there at once, arriving on the 25th.³ In a very few days he had re-formed and greatly increased his army by judiciously distributing the raw levies among his veteran troops, and on the 1st of October he started out to find and defeat his adversary.

During this period there was great alarm felt in Washington regarding the military situation in the West. The Government, as early as August 19th, created a new Department, called the Department of the Ohio, consisting of Kentucky and the States north of it, and assigned Major-General Wright, an able and experienced officer, to the command of it.⁴

¹ Cf. the remarks of General Wheeler, in 3 B. & L., 20-22.

² 22 W. R., 48.

³ 23 W. R., 542. The last division reached Louisville on the 29th; 22 W. R., 49.

⁴ 23 W. R., 375.

There followed, of course, some conflicts of jurisdiction, but, fortunately, none of importance. The fact that General Buell's headquarters during the months of June, July, and August were at points in Alabama and southern Tennessee rendered such a step necessary. After the destruction of the railroad near Gallatin on August 12th, a feeling of uneasiness in respect to Buell's army began to pervade the public mind, and when Bragg actually invaded Kentucky early in September, the alarm in Louisville and even in Cincinnati grew rapidly.¹ Buell's position and circumstances were not understood in Washington. Halleck thought him very slow.² The President and Secretary of War even decided to relieve him, and to put Thomas in his place³; but the orders did not arrive until September 29th, when Buell was preparing to move against Bragg. Hence Thomas generously asked that Buell should be retained in command, and to this request the Government assented. But Mr. Stanton,⁴ it seems pretty clear, believed that Buell ought somehow to have prevented this invasion of Kentucky and Tennessee, and in this opinion the governors of Ohio,⁵ Indiana, and Illinois⁶ concurred, as did also Johnson, the Military Governor of Tennessee—all loyal men, but not one of them sufficiently acquainted with military matters to understand the situation in which Buell had been placed since the first of August. They could not pardon an officer who had not risked a great battle

¹ 23 W. R., 523, 524, 538, 542; 109 W. R., 277-284.

² 23 W. R., 530, 542.

⁵ *Ib.*, 652.

³ *Ib.*, 538, 539.

⁴ *Ib.*, 652.

⁶ *Ib.*, 662.

to defend Kentucky and Tennessee from Bragg's invasion. Sentiment, often passing into indignation and even into passion, prevented them from considering intelligently the military problems of the last two months.

In point of fact, the balance of advantage was now, on October 1st, decidedly with the Federals. The Confederates had, it is true, captured isolated garrisons, defeated a force of raw recruits, and obtained some valuable supplies. But they had not destroyed—in truth, they had not dared to fight—the main Union army. And now that army had reached its base without suffering any loss; it had received heavy reinforcements; the chance of defeating it was smaller than ever. Bragg unquestionably lost his great opportunity for a successful battle in refusing to attack Buell immediately after the capture of Munfordville.¹

It might have been expected, certainly, that so experienced a soldier as General Bragg would now have concentrated his forces, united his army with that of General Smith, and given his sole attention to the struggle which he must have recognized to be impending. No one could doubt that the Union army would now assume the offensive vigorously, and that that army must either be defeated, and badly defeated too, or the Confederate forces must retire from Kentucky. But a mania for constitutional and legal forms seems to have possessed the authorities and even the generals of the Confederacy.²

¹ Cf. 3 B. & L., 600, 601.

² 6 N. & H., 277; 2 Pollard, 155.

Bragg and Smith determined to inaugurate a secessionist governor of Kentucky under the protection of their armies; and Mr. Richard Hawes was to be duly sworn into office at Frankfort, the capital of the State. This preposterous performance might be suffered to pass without comment, were it not for the fact that the arrangements needed for the ceremony and its adjuncts interfered with the military requirements of the situation.

Bragg, it will be remembered, had retired from the neighborhood of Munfordville to Bardstown. Here he put his army under the charge of General Polk,¹ and on October 1st proceeded to Lexington,² where Kirby Smith had his headquarters, and where also the stores of all kinds gathered by that officer during his stay in Kentucky were collected. Here the two generals, instead of joining their forces to defeat the enemy, whom they believed to be approaching,³ made their arrangements for Mr. Hawes's inauguration. They proposed to be in Frankfort on the 3d, and the inauguration was to take place on the 4th.

Buell, starting out from Louisville on the 1st, sent two divisions under Generals Sill and Dumont in the direction of Frankfort to contain or observe Kirby Smith, and, with the rest of his army, marched in three columns towards Bardstown, with the intention of attacking Bragg.⁴ Both Bragg and Smith were deceived by these movements of Buell. They thought the force under Sill and Dumont was

¹ 22 W. R., 1109.

² *Ib.*, 1091.

³ 23 W. R., 896.

⁴ 1 Van Horne, 184.

the main Federal army, and, on the afternoon of the 2d, Bragg ordered Polk to march north from Bardstown to attack the Union army in flank as it was marching east, while he and Smith opposed it in front.¹ Polk, however, having other and more trustworthy information, had already written to Bragg on the morning of the 2d that Buell was approaching Bardstown, and on the 3d he told Bragg that he should not obey his orders, but should fall back toward Camp Breckinridge,² a place formerly known as Camp Dick Robinson,³ situated about fifty miles from Bardstown in a southeasterly direction. He added that he had called a council of his officers, and that they had unanimously indorsed his decision.⁴ On receiving this word from Polk, Bragg the next morning ordered him to concentrate the army at Harrodsburg.⁵ Later in the day he wrote to Polk, that he expected to put his "Governor in power soon," and "then" he proposed "to seek the enemy."⁶

On the 5th of October Kirby Smith's forces, known as the Army of Kentucky, having left Frankfort on the afternoon of the 4th, immediately after the ceremony,⁷ were at Versailles,⁸ some twenty miles north of Harrodsburg, covering the depot of stores at Lexington. On the 7th, Smith, thinking that he was confronted by a large force of the enemy, asked Bragg for reinforcements. It was

¹ 23 W. R., 897.

² *Ib.*, 901.

³ *Ib.*, 887.

⁴ Out of this refusal to obey orders, there arose quite a lengthy correspondence; 22 W. R., 1097-1107.

⁵ 23 W. R., 904.

⁷ 3 B. & L., 602.

⁶ *Ib.*, 905.

⁸ 23 W. R., 915.

thereupon decided by Bragg that the army under Polk should march from Harrodsburg to Versailles to join that of Smith.¹ But before this movement had been completed, Bragg learned that Union forces were pressing at Perryville his left wing under Hardee, which had not yet moved towards Harrodsburg, and he thereupon ordered Polk to send one of the two divisions of the right wing—Cheatham's—back to Perryville.² This was done; and on the morning of October 8th, Bragg's army, excepting the division of Withers, was at Perryville, numbering about 17,000 men.³ Buell's forces, excepting the divisions of Sill and Dumont, were also near Perryville, but his troops had arrived from several directions,—“the distance from one flank of the army to the other was not perhaps less than six miles,”⁴—the different bodies were much separated from each other in searching for water, of which there was a great scarcity in this region,⁵ and the line of battle had not been formed by noon. The presence of the enemy in force does not seem to have been recognized.⁶ General Buell was at his

¹ 22 W. R., 1092, 1095.

² Both Polk and Hardee urged Bragg to concentrate the whole army at Perryville; 22 W. R., 1109, 1120.

³ Bragg's Report, *ib.*, 1092. Hardee says (*ib.*, 1120) that his effective force—the left wing—did not exceed 10,000 men. The right wing,—Polk's, afterwards Cheatham's—had been reduced from 15,588 on August 22d (23 W. R., 772) to 10,979 on October 3d (*ib.*, 900). Deducting Withers's division 5524 (which was not present), from Cheatham's 10,979, and adding the 1500 cavalry, which Bragg (22 W. R., 1092) says were present, we get a total of 16,955.

⁴ 22 W. R., 1025, 1026.

⁵ 23 W. R., 565, 575, 580, 587; 22 W. R., 1024, 1025.

⁶ 22 W. R., 1039.

headquarters some two miles and a half behind the centre of the army, and General Thomas, the second in command, was on the extreme right. There was something peculiar in the state of the atmosphere. Buell at his headquarters did not hear the sound of heavy firing.¹ Thomas did not know that there had been a battle till after nightfall.² About 2 P.M. the Confederates fiercely assaulted the Union left under McCook, and in spite of a gallant resistance forced it back in disorder, capturing some fifteen guns. The corps of Gilbert, on McCook's right, failed for some reason to render effective assistance, at least until the close of the action, when Sheridan in a spirited fight drove his opponents through the town of Perryville. The action was a bloody one for the number of troops engaged and considering its brief duration—the Confederates losing about 3400 men,³ and the Federals 4200.⁴ The Confederates achieved a tactical success against the Union left, but for all practical purposes the battle was a drawn battle. At night the Confederates retired.⁵

The battle of Perryville was an accidental encounter of two armies, rather than a pitched battle. General Buell was not informed of the action till 4 P.M., and had not the time or the opportunity to make use of his great superiority in numbers. Of the 58,000 men⁶ which he had in that vicinity, not much more than half were engaged. Only one brigade of Crittenden's corps on the right of the

¹ 22 W. R., 50, 51.

² *Ib.*, 187.

³ *Ib.*, 1112.

⁴ *Ib.*, 1036.

⁵ Cf. Buell's Report, 22 W. R., 1031.

⁶ *Ib.*, 1028.

line was in action at all. The next morning Buell gave orders to attack, but Bragg had retired to Harrodsburg. He had made a great blunder in exposing his little army to an attack from Buell's much superior forces, and he felt now the absolute necessity of uniting with the Army of Kentucky under Kirby Smith.

Up to this time the two Confederate armies had acted independently. Hawes, as we know, was inaugurated as Governor at Frankfort on October 4th, and in the afternoon of that day the Army of Kentucky evacuated the town.¹ It was immediately afterward occupied by the Federal general, Sill. Kirby Smith retired to Versailles,² on the east side of the Kentucky River, where he covered the principal approach to Lexington, where were his supplies. At this time he expected a battle at Versailles,³ and (as we know) he sent to Bragg and obtained Withers's division.⁴ Hearing soon afterwards that Sill was moving south on the west side of the Kentucky River, he, on the 8th, transferred his army to that side, and expected to fight a battle near Lawrenceburg.⁵ Sill, however, evaded him, and on the 9th, Smith, having learned of the battle at Perryville, marched to Bragg's assistance.⁶ He arrived at Harrodsburg on the 10th.⁷

Buell, on his part, finding that Bragg had retired on Harrodsburg, where he would without doubt join the force under Kirby Smith, waited for Sill to

¹ 22 W. R., 1020.

² 23 W. R., 915.

³ *Ib.*, 919, 922.

⁴ 22 W. R., 1092.

⁵ 23 W. R., 925.

⁶ *Ib.*, 927.

⁷ 22 W. R., 1093.

come up before offering battle. He may perhaps have overestimated the strength of his enemy, but he remembered that 22,000 of the 54,000 men which remained to the Union army after the battle of Perryville were raw troops,¹ and he expected to meet at least 20,000 men of Bragg's army, and 10,000 or 15,000 more of Kirby Smith's, and they were all veteran soldiers. He knew well the extreme importance of the situation. But he fully intended to fight, and he fully expected that Bragg would fight.² He had no idea that Bragg would relinquish his hold on the State of Kentucky without fighting a battle; and he thought—and justly—that for this battle he—Buell—ought to assemble all his available troops. His adversaries had now united their forces; it would be taking a wholly unnecessary risk for him not to call in all his detachments.

But Bragg looked at his duty from a wholly different standpoint. He recognized that he had so far accomplished nothing. He had not defeated Buell's army, nor had he persuaded the Kentuckians to rise in revolt against the Federal Government. A great victory over Buell would, no doubt, change the situation materially, but an undecisive battle was far more probable than a great victory. Buell had now unrestricted recourse, through Louisville, to the resources of the Northwestern States, both in men and supplies; the Confederates, on the other hand, expected no reinforcements from any quarter, and

¹ 22 W. R., 1028. A brigade of these new troops—Terrill's—had given way in confusion at Perryville; *ib.*, 1026, 1040.

² *Id.*, 51-53; Fry, 72-74.

could rely on no other supplies than those which they had already collected. Should he be defeated, Bragg had no alternative but to retreat as best he might, over terribly bad roads, into East Tennessee—roads over which in November and December it was next to impossible even for an unbeaten army to march. Under all the circumstances, therefore, Bragg, after waiting a few days at Harrodsburg, to see if Buell would attack him in position, withdrew his army to Camp Dick Robinson, and thence into East Tennessee.

Accordingly Buell, who waited until the evening of October 11th for Sill to arrive, and who immediately thereupon advanced on Harrodsburg, and afterwards on Camp Dick Robinson, found his antagonist unwilling to hazard a battle. He started in pursuit, but the Confederate retreat was well managed; their rear was admirably protected by the cavalry of Wheeler and Wharton; and at London, Buell, convinced of the impolicy of carrying his army at that season of the year into the difficult country of East Tennessee,¹ discontinued the pursuit and transferred his troops to Bowling Green and Glasgow, intending, later on, to place his forces at some point or points east of Nashville, on the Nashville and Chattanooga railroad, in readiness for another season of active campaigning.

At this juncture, on October 24th—by an order received on October 30th—Buell was relieved from command, and Rosecrans, who, under Grant, had been commanding the Army of the Mississippi in

¹ 23 W. R., 619.

western Tennessee, was put in Buell's place.¹ Why the Government did not adhere to the original plan of replacing Buell by Thomas is not clear; it is possible that Thomas's request to Halleck to allow Buell to continue in command,² made when he learned in Louisville in the last days of September that the Administration had relieved Buell and had appointed him in Buell's place, had been unpalatable to the Washington authorities. At any rate, at this time, Thomas was passed over, and Rosecrans was appointed to the command of the army which Buell had been commanding, and which was now designated as the 14th army corps.³

The removal of General Buell was preceded by a correspondence between him and General Halleck, who expressed undoubtedly the views of President Lincoln and Secretary Stanton⁴ quite as much as his own.⁵ Buell clearly stated the facts of the situation—the sterile nature of the region through which the army must advance into East Tennessee; the consumption of all its resources by the retreating Confederates; the inadequacy of his force to preserve his communications and at the same time carry a column of sufficient strength into the enemy's country; the difficulty of the mountainous roads and passes; and also the importance of holding Nashville and the railroad between Nashville and Louisville. He did not deny the importance of the acquisition of East Tennessee, but insisted that the

¹ 23 W. R., 640, 653.

² *Ib.*, 555.

⁴ *Ib.*, 619, 621, 636, 637. Cf. 6 N. & H., 279-281.

³ *Ib.*, 641.

⁵ Fry, 101, 102.

Union forces were not at that moment adequate to this task. To these arguments, Halleck replied by urging that the enemy must be driven out of East Tennessee¹; that the President had said that the "army must enter East Tennessee this fall"²; that the Union army could live where the Confederate army could—ignoring the probability that the retreating army would exhaust the limited resources of the country. There was in reality no serious attempt on Halleck's part to answer Buell's arguments; there was simply a reiteration of the President's wishes, and an ignoring of all the difficulties in the way of carrying them out. No one who will take the trouble to read this correspondence, and is capable of forming a judgment on the military questions involved in it, can hesitate an instant in arriving at the conclusion that General Buell was in the right.

But the President and Secretary were neither willing nor competent to discuss the question on purely military grounds; and Buell was accordingly removed. It cannot be doubted that the cause of the Union was seriously injured by withdrawing Buell from the command of this army. Buell was as able a general as any in the service. Had he at the first—that is, on November 1, 1861—been placed in chief command in the West, it is not too much to say that the Confederate army of the West would have ceased to exist before June 1, 1862, and that thereafter a regiment of Union troops could have marched without opposition from Nashville to Chattanooga and Knoxville. But circumstances, which have been al-

¹ 23 W. R., 623.

² *Ib.*, 627, 638.

ready sufficiently recounted, obliged him to take a course the necessity of which could not be made apparent to the strenuous and excitable political leaders in the West, or to the unmilitary minds of the President and Secretary of War.

His successor, General Rosecrans, had served under Grant, as we have said, during the previous summer, in western Tennessee, and had recently fought two bloody battles against the forces under Van Dorn and Price, which Bragg, when he moved his army from Tupelo to Chattanooga, had left in upper Mississippi, to hold Grant in check, and, if possible, gain some advantage over him. The first of these actions, fought at Iuka on September 19th, was not a brilliant success, although the Confederates retired after it. The second, fought at Corinth on October 3d and 4th, was a decisive victory, and established Rosecrans's reputation as a hard fighter and an able officer. The attack of Van Dorn and Price on the Federal army intrenched at Corinth was most gallantly made and was well supported, and the resistance was equally brave and tenacious. The Confederates were decisively repulsed, and the credit of their defeat justly belonged to General Rosecrans. The Government undoubtedly considered him a vigorous and a fortunate officer. But if Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Stanton expected to find in Rosecrans a docile and obedient general, who would perform impossibilities when desired to do so,¹ they were woefully mistaken. On arriving at Louisville on November 1st, Rosecrans told Halleck that he was

¹ 23 W. R., 640 ; 3 C. W. (1865), Rosecrans's Campaigns, 24.

going to Bowling Green; that the move by Somerset into East Tennessee was impracticable; and that he was going to move, as fast as supplies could be obtained, towards Gallatin and Nashville.¹ He was soon able to report that all Bragg's forces were moving towards Murfreesborough, intending, probably, to attack Nashville—McCown only being left in East Tennessee.²

Thus ended the Confederate invasion of Kentucky and Tennessee in the summer and autumn of 1862.

Whether it would not have been wiser for the Confederate Government to send 25,000 or 30,000 men to Virginia as soon as it became plain that Halleck was not proposing to take the offensive with vigor—say, by June 15th—is a question which we cannot forbear stating. Such an addition to Lee's army in the Seven Days' Battles might very possibly have given him a decisive victory over McClellan. And a decisive victory was a necessity for the success of the Southern cause. For as the United States had taken the position that the South was in rebellion, the military necessities of the Southern Confederacy were not determined by the political attitude assumed by the Southern States, but were, for all practical purposes, exactly what they would have been if the Southern people, like the people of the Thirteen Colonies in 1776, had conceded that they were, strictly speaking, in rebellion. That is to say, the United States in 1861, like Great Britain in 1776, was not waging war to obtain accessions of territory, or commercial or political advantages, but to put

¹ 30 W. R., 3.

² *Ib.*, 17.

down and crush out all opposition whatever ; and this attitude of the United States made the obtaining on the part of the South of a success as signal and decisive as that of Saratoga or Yorktown an almost necessary condition of the achievement of her independence. Without a success of this magnitude, it was not to be expected that the Southern Confederacy would either gain recognition in Europe, or convince the North that it had undertaken an impossible task.

For the weaker party in a war of this kind to gain such a decisive success requires the deliberate adoption on its part of a military policy very different from that which a weaker nation would usually be justified in adopting in an ordinary war. This difference results from the fact, that in an ordinary war both parties look forward, as the ultimate result of the struggle, to a treaty, which, whatever may be its provisions, will be certain to leave the two nations in existence ; whereas in such wars as those of 1776 and 1861 it is the political existence of the weaker party which is at stake. In wars of this latter description, therefore, the paramount object of the weaker party should be to gain such striking successes as will compel its recognition as a nation ; and in order to gain these successes, almost any risks may justifiably be taken. As a rule, a vigorous offensive in one part of the theatre of war should be maintained at the expense and risk of making little or no provision for the defence of other parts of the country, if in this way a decisive success against the stronger adversary can be seen to be possible.

It certainly would seem that President Davis never adopted the view of the war which we have given above. Only once or twice¹ were serious efforts made to concentrate large numbers of troops for a particular campaign; the usual practice in the South as well as in the North was to let each Department take care of itself. But at the time of which we are speaking, surely the invasion of Tennessee and Kentucky ought to have been postponed, and the chance of overwhelming the Army of the Potomac in its retreat from the Chickahominy to the James improved. Van Dorn and Price could have maintained a strictly defensive attitude in northern Mississippi; Kirby Smith, with the vigorous assistance of Forrest and Morgan, would, without much doubt, have been able to hold East Tennessee until the 1st of August; and Bragg with 30,000 men might have joined Lee before the 25th of June. Who can say what might not have been accomplished with this powerful reinforcement? The attempt was, it seems to us, well worth making.²

¹ As when Longstreet's corps was sent to join Bragg, in September, 1863.

² Cf. *ante*, Part I., 169; Lee, 28 W. R., 591; J. E. Johnston, 30 W. R., 460; Bragg, *ib.*, 493; Beauregard, 1 B. & L., 221; Smith, C. W. P., 13-40.





CHAPTER V.

THE FEDERALS RESUME THE OFFENSIVE IN THE WEST : THE BATTLE OF MURFREESBOROUGH.

GENERAL HALLECK, in his letter of instructions of October 24, 1862, which accompanied President Lincoln's order placing Rosecrans in command of the army then under Buell, urged upon the new commander to push into East Tennessee by way of Somerset, but at the same time permitted him, in view of all the circumstances, to go to Nashville and to operate from that city as a base. The damage done by Morgan to the Louisville and Nashville railroad near Gallatin by destroying the tunnel had not yet been repaired, and Halleck himself in this letter called Rosecrans's attention to the necessity of repairing and guarding this railroad, so as to secure his supplies from Louisville until the Cumberland River (on which Nashville was situated) should become navigable.¹ Halleck, however, though evidently realizing the difficulties in Rosecrans's path, did not hesitate to conclude his letter with a warning. "I need not urge upon you," wrote he, "the necessity of giving active employment to your forces.

¹ 23 W. R., 640, 641. The Cumberland and Tennessee rivers became navigable in the latter part of the winter.

Neither the country nor the Government will much longer put up with the inactivity of some of our armies and generals." This language simply conveyed General Halleck's belief as to the probable action of the President and Mr. Stanton.¹ This belief of his as to their principles of dealing with the generals of the army had been even more baldly and distinctly stated in a letter to General Wright on August 25th.² After saying that the President and Secretary of War were greatly displeased with the slow movements of General Buell, and that he (Buell) would probably be removed "unless he does something very soon," Halleck proceeds as follows: "There must be more energy and activity in Kentucky and Tennessee, and the one who first does something brilliant will get the entire command. . . . The Government seems determined to apply the guillotine to all unsuccessful generals. It seems rather hard to do this where the general is not in fault, but perhaps with us now, as in the French Revolution, some harsh measures are required."³ We have had occasion to call our readers' attention before to this feature in the conduct of the war by President Lincoln and Secretary Stanton.⁴ "Neither of them made any real effort to understand the nature and extent of the harassing and difficult tasks" of the generals who were faithfully doing their best to achieve the conquest of the South. Generals in high command not infrequently received from the Administration reminders to the effect that their positions

¹ Fry, 101.² 23 W. R., 421.³ Cf. 35 W. R., 95, 111; also Fry, 99.⁴ Part I., 226, 227.

were held by a very precarious tenure. The impression created at the time by these things was most disagreeable; nor can it ever be expected to disappear. The President and Secretary acted in this regard as would the stockholders of a corporation, who should either neglect to read or be incompetent to understand the reports of the directors, and should vote to retain them in office or to dismiss them, as they did or did not declare dividends.

Accordingly we are not surprised to find Halleck telling Rosecrans,¹ even when the tunnel near Galatin was not yet in running order,² that if he remained long at Nashville he would disappoint the wishes of the Government. A letter of Halleck's on December 4th,³ however, brought this kind of fault-finding to a head. "The President," said he, "is very impatient at your long stay in Nashville. . . . Twice have I been asked to designate some one else to command your army. If you remain one more week at Nashville, I cannot prevent your removal. As I wrote you when you took the command, the Government demands action, and, if you cannot respond to that demand, some one else will be tried." To this letter, which one can hardly imagine having actually been sent by the General-in-Chief of a civilized nation to an educated and able officer of high rank—this letter, couched in language which one might perhaps apply to a clerk in a subordinate position—General Rosecrans returned, the same evening,

¹ 30 W. R., 102; November 27, 1862; 3 C. W. (1865), Rosecrans's Campaigns, 25.

² 30 W. R., 93.

³ *Ib.*, 117.

a dignified and manly answer. "I reply," said he, "in few but earnest words. I have lost no time. . . . If the Government which ordered me here confides in my judgment, it may rely on my continuing to do what I have been trying to do—that is, my whole duty. If my superiors have lost confidence in me, they had better at once put some one in my place, and let the future test the propriety of the change. I have but one word to add, which is, that I need no other stimulus to make me do my duty than the knowledge of what it is. To threats of removal or the like I must be permitted to say that I am insensible."¹ For this clear assertion of the proper position of a general officer as respects his Government, and of the consideration due to that position from the Government, General Rosecrans deserved the thanks of his profession. General Halleck, in his answer,² denied that he had used a threat, and dwelt at length on the probable political effect on the action of European nations of delay in the recovery by General Rosecrans of the territory of which, in the beginning of the year, the Federal Government had been in possession in the State of Tennessee.

We do not mean to say, or to imply, that the civil administration has not a perfect right in certain cases to remove a general officer for slowness. Slowness may be one of the effects of the inability of the general to master the situation in which he is placed; this inability of his may result from his own incompetence; and incompetence, of course, always justifies the removal of an officer. What we object to is

¹ 30 W. R., 118.

² *Ib.*, 123.

the threat,—partly because it is a threat, and partly because in military movements it is often beyond the power of any general, no matter how able or energetic he may be, to prevent delay.¹

Rosecrans, in fact, delayed three weeks after receiving Halleck's last warning. In so doing he was simply carrying out the plan which he had announced to Halleck as early as November 17th,² which was to remain where he was until the railroad to Louisville should be fully opened, and he should be able through its instrumentality to accumulate an abundance (2,000,000) of rations at Nashville. It was only in this way that he could hope to carry out his movements unaffected by the raids which it was certain that the enemy's cavalry would make on his communications. If he should advance to Murfreesborough while he was yet dependent on the regular arrival of the trains to bring to his army its daily supplies, it is plain that a successful attempt on the railroad—the destruction of a tunnel, the burning of a trestle-bridge—would always necessitate a halt, and might also cause much embarrassment and even danger. But, by postponing his advance until he should be comparatively independent of the daily service of the railroad trains, he would be able to view the enterprises of the Confederate cavalry with indifference and to pursue his plans without interruption. This he soon demonstrated.

The Louisville and Nashville railroad was fully repaired by November 26th,³ and in a month it had

¹ Cf. Part I., 236.

² 30 W. R., 59.

³ 29 W. R., 189.

performed its task of furnishing the reserve supplies. On December 24th, Rosecrans put his army in motion towards Murfreesborough, in the vicinity of which town Bragg had now concentrated the bulk of his forces. A part of his cavalry, indeed, he had sent off in two bodies,—one, under Morgan, to break up the Louisville and Nashville railroad, which that officer successfully accomplished on December 26th,¹ and the other under Forrest, who, about the same time, broke up the railroad between Columbus, Kentucky, and Corinth, Tennessee,² on which Grant relied for the greater part of his supplies. But Bragg wisely retained the three brigades of Wheeler, Wharton, and Pegram with the army, and their skilful movements screened the positions and manœuvres of his infantry, on which he placed his chief reliance, and delayed the advance of the Federal forces until arrangements could be completed for their reception.³ He probably would have done better if he had kept Forrest and Morgan with him, but it would seem that they were despatched on their respective errands before the movements of Rosecrans indicated with certainty that a battle was imminent.⁴

On December 26th, Rosecrans commenced his advance. His army consisted (as he states⁵) of about 47,000 men, of whom 43,600 were infantry

¹ 29 W. R., 153-158.

² Greene, 70.

³ 29 W. R., 663.

⁴ *Ib.*, 189; 1 Van Horne, 217, 218.

⁵ *Ib.*, 196, 201. The December return gives a much larger number; 30 W. R., 283.

and artillery. Bragg had not quite 38,000 men, of whom about 33,500 were infantry and artillery.¹

The Federal troops encountered opposition at every point, and it was not until the afternoon of December 30th that they arrived in the immediate vicinity of Murfreesborough. The Confederate lines were here discovered, and General Rosecrans made his plan for an attack early the next morning.

The stream known as Stone's River (or, rather, as the west branch of Stone's River) rises some twenty miles south of Murfreesborough, and flows in a northerly direction until it is about a mile west of the town, where it turns eastwardly and crosses the Nashville and Chattanooga railroad and also the turnpike which runs from Nashville to Murfreesborough; it then turns to the northwest, pursuing a course generally parallel to both these roads until it unites with the east branch, when the united stream continues in this same course until it falls into the Cumberland River just east of Nashville. It is a stream which varies in depth at different seasons of the year, and at this time it was fordable in many places.

The turnpike running from Murfreesborough to Nashville runs in a northwesterly direction to that city, as does also the railroad, which is generally parallel with it. The greater part of both armies

¹ 29 W. R., 674. On November 20th, Bragg estimated his force of infantry and artillery at 40,000 men, and his "regular" cavalry,—*i. e.*, his cavalry exclusive of Forrest's and Morgan's commands,—at 5000 more; 30 W. R., 422. His field return of December 10th showed an "effective total of the three arms" of 51,036; 30 W. R., 446. Yet in a letter to Johnston of January 11, 1863, he says: "My infantry and artillery was [*sic*] not 31,000"; 30 W. R., 493.

was on the south side of the river, the railroad, and the turnpike; Rosecrans's forces facing east and those of Bragg facing west. Bragg's left overlapped Rosecrans's right. This was the position of the two armies on the night of December 30, 1862.

Rosecrans had determined to push forward his left early the next morning, the 31st, across the river, to seize the railroad at Murfreesborough,—thus turning Bragg's right, cutting his army off from its line of supplies,¹—and then to drive it southward.

Bragg, singularly enough, conceived a similar plan. He proposed that, as soon as it was light, his left wing under Hardee should turn Rosecrans's right, and, supported by the centre under Polk, and, if necessary, by troops taken from the right wing under Breckinridge,—that is, by the larger part of his forces,—should drive the Federal army back upon the Nashville turnpike, should, if possible, seize this, and also the railroad,² thus, in all probability, inflicting a decisive defeat upon his antagonist.

The Union army consisted of the three corps of Crittenden, Thomas, and McCook. McCook was on the right, Thomas in the centre, and Crittenden on the left. Crittenden's command rested on Stone's River.

On the Confederate side the division of Breckinridge of Hardee's corps was on the right, opposite Crittenden's corps; the corps of Polk constituted the centre; and Hardee's other division, that of Cleburne, together with McCown's division of Kirby Smith's East Tennessee army, which the latter officer

¹ 29 W. R., 192.

² *Ib.*, 664.

had recently sent to Bragg, composed the left. The cavalry was ordered to operate in the rear of the Federal army, to pick up prisoners, to attack ammunition and supply trains, and to create as much disturbance and annoyance as possible.

Bragg's plan to extend his left so as to overlap McCook's line was not well concealed. It appears that statements to the effect that the Confederate left extended beyond McCook's position,—“that Hardee's corps was entirely beyond [*i. e.*, south of] the Franklin road,”¹ that, in fact, “the right of McCook's line rested directly in front of the enemy's centre,”—were made to McCook in the middle of the afternoon of the 30th, and were by him communicated to Rosecrans.² In spite of this information, McCook's entire line, with the exception of one brigade (Willich's), which was on his extreme right, and faced south, looked toward the east. When Rosecrans learned this, he told McCook that “such a direction to his line did not appear to him to be a proper one, but that it ought, with the exception of the left, to face much more nearly south.”³ Rosecrans, nevertheless, left the whole matter to McCook, as knowing the ground. Later in the evening, Rosecrans told McCook that it was necessary for the success of his plan of battle that he, McCook, should be able to hold his position for three hours, until Crittenden's attack should become fully developed. McCook told him that he thought he could hold his

¹ 29 W. R., 255. McCook afterwards verified the truth of this statement; *ib.*, 257.

² *Id.*, 255.

³ *Id.*, 191.

position for three hours¹; and, on this assurance, the commanding general, though he again expressed his opinion that too large a part of McCook's line faced to the east, decided to make no change in his dispositions, and deliberately took his chance that Bragg would not upset all his calculations by first enveloping and then routing his right wing.

It was the second time in the war that similar plans had been formed for the conduct of a battle by the opposing commanders. At the first battle of Bull Run, General Beauregard intended to attack the Union left, while General McDowell proposed to turn the Confederate left; and at Stone's River, as at Bull Run, the commander who was the first to move controlled the course of the action. The orders sent by Beauregard, it will be remembered, failed to reach his lieutenants promptly, and the approach of a powerful Federal force on the left of their line compelled him and Johnston to abandon all thought of resuming their interrupted plan and to devote all their attention to the danger which threatened them.²

It was so at Murfreesborough. Hardee began his attack soon after 6 A.M.,³ when McCown, closely followed by Cleburne, attacked Johnson's division, which occupied the right of McCook's line. It is probable that a somewhat better defence might have been made here; Johnson seems to have placed his reserve brigade too far in the rear; and of the commanders of his other brigades one was almost im-

¹ 29 W. R., 192.

² *Ante*, Part I., 142, 143.

³ 29 W. R., 304, 917 *et seq.*

mediately mortally wounded and the other captured, so that the troops, who were excellent troops, were for the moment without commanders. But nothing could really have been done to defend such an exposed point. The Confederates, far exceeding their opponents in number at this particular place, outflanking them completely, pressed on with the audacity and energy which they always displayed in an assault. There was from the first no question as to the result. Johnson's division was completely routed, and its destruction exposed the right of Davis's division, the next in line. But Davis had had more time to prepare, and his resistance was naturally more protracted. So also it was with Sheridan, who had the division on Davis's left,¹ the three constituting McCook's corps. McCook himself did all that a good officer could do under such trying circumstances. Sheridan showed here that capacity for handling troops in action which was afterwards to make him so distinguished.² He and Thomas, who afterwards commanded this Army of the Cumberland, protracted the defence of their lines till 11 A.M.³ The fighting was most obstinate and bloody. Sheridan's three brigadiers were all killed. The losses on both sides were terrible. But there was nothing to be done in the end but to fall back. The right of the line was turned; there was no natural obstacle which could be made available for defence⁴; there was nothing to do but to fall

¹ He was not attacked till 7.15 A.M.; 29 W. R., 348.

² McCook's report; 29 W. R., 256.

³ 29 W. R., 373, 407.

⁴ *Ib.*, 257.

back to the Nashville turnpike, where a junction could be made with the reserves and with Crittenden's corps.

This last-mentioned officer, who commanded on the Union left, got his troops in motion about 8 A.M.¹ One of his divisions was crossing Stone's River when news was brought to him of the rout of the right wing under McCook. Rosecrans, who, for the last hour or so, had received word that McCook was "heavily pressed and needed assistance,"² had contented himself with directing that officer to "hold his ground obstinately"; but by eight o'clock it was plain to him that his right wing was defeated, if not routed. In this grave emergency Rosecrans acted with courage and decision. He ordered the bulk of Crittenden's corps back on the Nashville turnpike to reinforce the centre and right, leaving only troops enough to hold and defend the crossing of the river. Galloping back to the scene of action, he exerted himself gallantly and energetically to restore order and inspire confidence.³ And he succeeded. Seconded by Thomas, Sheridan, Negley, Rousseau, and other capable and resolute officers, proper positions were finally taken up: the excellent artillery of the Union army—with the exception of 28 pieces, which had been captured—was judiciously posted; the divisions of Crittenden, and the division of Rousseau of Thomas's corps, which had not taken a serious part in the action of the early morning, were skillfully arranged so as to give support and encouragement to the unfortunate troops which in the fore-

¹ 29 W. R., 449.

² *Ib.*, 193.

³ *Cist*, 128, 129.

noon had been driven in such confusion across the field of battle. The new positions were no sooner assumed than they were attacked by the Confederates with even more than their usual impetuosity. A complete victory seemed fairly within their grasp. But their most desperate and heroic efforts were all in vain. The Union troops stood firm. Their artillery was handled with great effect: the Confederate losses were enormous; and at dark their attacks ceased.

Few battles have been fought which have better exhibited the soldierly virtues than the battle of Murfreesborough or Stone's River. The Confederate assaults were conducted with the utmost gallantry and with untiring energy. They were met with great coolness and resolution. The recovery of the Union army, so nearly routed, was wonderful, and assuredly could not have been accomplished had there been any wavering or lack of confidence on the part of the high officers, or any demoralization on the part of the soldiers. The Confederates had a right to claim a victory, for they had taken 28 guns¹ and about 3700 prisoners.² Still, the Federal army was, for all practical purposes, as strong as ever. The truth is, the Confederates were not numerous enough to complete their victory.

That the Union army should have been beaten at all, and especially that it should have been brought so near to an actual rout, was mainly, it must be admitted, the fault of its sanguine and gallant commander. For, had he carefully weighed the informa-

¹ 29 W. R., 194.

² *Ib.*, 215.

tion as to the position of the Confederate forces which he received on the afternoon before the battle, and had he then carefully disposed his right wing so as to meet the assault which it was plain Bragg intended to make the next morning, he could have saved his army from the peril to which it so nearly succumbed. It may surely be expected of a commanding general who is about to fight a great battle that he should arrange his army in accordance with his own best judgment. He has the power to do this, and no one can doubt that it is his duty to exercise his power. Yet Rosecrans at Murfreesborough failed to insist that his right wing should be arranged in accordance with his own judgment. He was, perhaps, too anxious to carry out his own plan of attack to give their due importance to those parts of the line of battle which were not under his own eye. Very possibly he did not care to overrule the opinion of a good officer, such as McCook was, in regard to the disposition of his own troops. At any rate, he made the great mistake of submitting his own judgment on a matter of vital importance to that of one of his corps-commanders.

On the day after the battle, January 1, 1863, both armies lay quiet. A part of Crittenden's corps, however, crossed the river, and occupied some commanding ground on the east side.

The next afternoon, January 2d, a sudden and furious assault was made on this position by Breckinridge's division, which was at first successful. But the place was commanded by the Federal artillery, and troops were immediately sent to recover the lost

ground, so that the affair finally turned out entirely to the advantage of the Union side. This ended the bloody and indecisive battle of Murfreesborough or Stone's River.

The loss on the Union side was about 9500 officers and men killed and wounded, and about 3700 prisoners.¹ That of the Confederates was about 9000 killed and wounded, and nearly 900 taken prisoners.² Late in the evening of January 3, 1863, Bragg withdrew his exhausted and disappointed army from the field of battle, and, passing through Murfreesborough, took up his winter quarters at and near Tullahoma, on the Nashville and Chattanooga railroad.³ Rosecrans made no attempt to follow him beyond Murfreesborough. The shattered condition of his army and the lateness of the season alike prevented offensive movements during the next few months.

¹ 29 W. R., 215.

² *Ib.*, 681.

³ *Ib.*, 669. For correspondence showing that Bragg had to a considerable extent lost the confidence of his principal lieutenants, see pp. 682-699.

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CHAPTER VI.

THE FEDERALS RESUME THE OFFENSIVE IN THE EAST: THE BATTLE OF FREDERICKSBURG.¹

THE Confederate invasion of Maryland had ended, as we have seen,² in the battle of Sharpsburg and the retirement of General Lee across the Potomac. The Washington authorities naturally expected General McClellan to follow up his success with a speedy invasion of Virginia. President Lincoln, Secretary Stanton, and General Halleck had not shared in the exaggerated estimate of the strength of the Confederate forces which had so oppressed the spirit of their general; in their minds, the failure of Lee was exactly what might have been expected, and his retreat into Virginia showed beyond a doubt that he might be advantageously followed up, and, as soon as practicable, attacked again. In this view they were probably right. Certainly the accessions to the numbers of the Confederate army during the autumn, caused in great part by the return of stragglers, and of absentees of all kinds, would go far to justify this opinion.³

¹ See Map XII., facing page 456.

² *Ante*, 378.

³ Field-return of the Army of Northern Virginia on September 22, 1862; 28 W. R., 621; ditto, November 10, 1862; *ib.*, 713.

But General McClellan took a wholly different view of the case. In his mind, the North had been in imminent peril of being overrun by the recently victorious army of General Lee,¹—"greatly superior to us," he said,² "in number,"—and he, McClellan, had saved the country.³ But he was far from contending that he had routed his antagonists. He claimed, it is true, a complete victory, but the scope of the whole operation was in his opinion limited to the salvation of the North.⁴ "Our victory," said he on the 19th of September, two days after the battle, "was complete. The enemy is driven back into Virginia. Maryland and Pennsylvania are now safe."⁵ So far, so good. But he did not think it prudent to carry his army at once, weakened as it had been in its recent battles, into Virginia. He indeed reoccupied Harper's Ferry as "a secure *débouché*"⁶ across the Potomac, and he fortified Maryland, Loudoun, and Bolivar Heights, where he placed Sumner with the 2d and 12th corps. But he was very far from having a sense of complete security against attack. It shows the tone of his mind at this time that he should have written to Halleck that he thought that Sumner would be "able to hold his position till reinforcements arrive."⁷ In fact, so far from being elated at the result of the recent campaign, he was not free from the gravest apprehensions. "A defeat at this juncture," he says in the same despatch, "would be ruinous to our

¹ 27 W. R., 65.⁴ *Ib.*, 82.² *Ib.*, 71.⁵ 28 W. R., 330.³ *Ib.*, 93.⁶ 27 W. R., 70.⁷ *Ib.*, 70. "A pitiful assertion," as General Palfrey (130) well says.

cause." In his opinion his soldiers were not in condition to undertake another campaign or to bring on another battle.¹ He thought that considerable time should be devoted to the reorganization of the army, the instruction of the new troops, and the filling up of the old regiments.² His cavalry, also, was in bad condition; a strange disease³ had appeared among the horses; the labor of doing picket-duty for the army had broken down many regiments.⁴ The soldiers, moreover, were greatly in need of shoes, blankets, and other articles of clothing.⁵

It is altogether probable that in most, if not all, of the above-mentioned respects the army of McClellan was actually suffering from the deficiencies mentioned by him. But it is plain that while these needs were being supplied the fine autumn weather was passing away. It was equally clear that the army of General Lee could not be in much better condition than that of McClellan; in fact, it was pretty well known that the Northern army was far better supplied than was that of Lee with everything necessary for a campaign, except, perhaps, horses⁶ for the cavalry and artillery.⁷ Hence the President and the Secretary of War could not arrive

¹ 27 W. R., 70.

² *Ib.*, 70, 71.

³ *Ib.*, 78; 28 W. R., 512, Franklin to Porter.

⁴ 27 W. R., 71. Cf. 28 W. R., 484, 485, 490, 491.

⁵ 27 W. R., 11, 12, 20-22, 74-77.

⁶ See Lee to Randolph, *ib.*, 701, 709.

⁷ During the first half of the war the Washington Government did not seem to understand the necessity of supplying the armies in the field with a sufficient force of cavalry. Buell and Rosecrans in the West and McClellan in the East could never get what their armies needed.

at a cordial understanding with General McClellan. His complaints seemed to them unnecessary and far-fetched, and they even suspected that he had no serious intention of engaging the enemy that autumn. The tone of his letters also was that of an officer who proposed to do exactly as he thought best. He did not always answer inconvenient questions, or explain why he did not carry out his orders.¹

We must mention another circumstance which unquestionably was one cause of the grave and increasing distrust of General McClellan on the part of the President and the Administration. This was the well-known opposition of the general to the course of the Government in regard to the emancipation of the slaves. It was, it is true, none of McClellan's business, as a general in the army, to take any part in this or any other political question. But McClellan entertained such inordinate ideas of his own importance, and of the advantages which his position in the field gave him of judging of the effect on the course of military events of any interference by the Federal Government in the direction of abolishing slavery, that he had already written to Mr. Lincoln, on July 7th, from Harrison's Landing, a most extraordinary letter² on the political situation. Hence, when the President put forth his Proclamation of September 22d,³—five days after the battle of the Antietam,—announcing his intention to free all the slaves in those States which should, on January 1, 1863, be in insurrection, it was natural to

¹ *Cf.* Palfrey, 130.

² McClellan's O. S., 487.

³ 6 N. & H., 168 *et seq.*

suspect that McClellan's opposition to any step of the kind might cause delay in the advance of the army. We do not ourselves believe that this feeling influenced McClellan's action in the slightest degree,¹ but it can easily be seen that such a suspicion might widely prevail.

While these controversies were occupying the minds of General McClellan and his political superiors in Washington, General Lee's army was gaining decidedly in strength and efficiency in its camp near Winchester and Bunker Hill.² It was while his army was resting here that General Lee sent Stuart, with three brigades of cavalry—in all about 1800 men—into Maryland and Pennsylvania, ostensibly “to ascertain the position and designs of the enemy.”³ Stuart crossed the Potomac above Williamsport on October 10th, avoided Hagerstown, went to Mercersburg and Chambersburg, where some stores and horses were picked up, and returned by way of Cashtown, Emmittsburg, and Hyattstown, fording the river at White's Ford, just above Poolesville, Maryland. In a sense his expedition was entirely successful, and Stuart certainly showed all the skill, address, and courage attributed to him by Lee. But with the exception of fatiguing the Union cavalry who chased him or endeavored to intercept him, Stuart did his adversaries no harm, nor did he bring his friends any information of consequence. He may, perhaps, have excited (as he says he did) a

¹ McClellan issued to his army on October 7th a very excellent General Order, enjoining acquiescence in any policy which the Administration might adopt; 28 W. R., 395.

² Allan, 452.

³ 27 W. R., 152; 28 W. R., 51 *et seq.*

"consternation among property-holders in Pennsylvania which beggared description,"¹ but what the results, "in a moral and political point of view," were, which he says "can hardly be estimated,"² it is not easy even to conjecture. One thing is certain: that if Stuart and his command had been captured, as they very possibly might have been without any fault of theirs, the Southern people would never have been able to see that it was worth while to risk so much for the chance of gaining so little.³

On October 6th, Halleck sent McClellan, by President Lincoln's direction, an order⁴ requiring him to "cross the Potomac and give battle to the enemy or drive him south." He was told to move "now, while the roads were good." He was further informed that if he should so move as to cover Washington,—that is, on the east side of the Blue Ridge,—he would receive reinforcements to the extent of 30,000 men; but that if he moved up the Shenandoah Valley he could not expect more than 12,000 or 15,000, and, also, that the President advised the interior line, but did not order it.⁵ On the next day McClellan wrote to Halleck,⁶ saying that after a full consultation with his corps-commanders he had "determined to adopt the line of the Shenandoah for immediate operations," but that he "did not regard the line of the Shenandoah Valley as important for ulterior objects.

¹ But they probably soon recovered from it. ² 28 W. R., 54.

³ *Ante*, 393. But see 2 Henderson, 359, 360. ⁴ 27 W. R., 10, 72.

⁵ In an interesting and able letter dated October 13th,—*ib.*, 13, 14, and 31 W. R., 97,—the President gives McClellan his views in support of this course.

⁶ 27 W. R., 11.

. . . The only possible object," he continued, "to be gained by an advance from this vicinity is to fight the enemy near Winchester." McClellan preferred the interior route,—which indeed was on every account superior to the other,—but he was afraid that if he took it at that time, the Confederates would re-enter Maryland,¹ the Potomac being at that season very low. Delays, however, ensued, and, towards the end of October,—at which date the wants of the army had been measurably supplied,—a rise in the river was to be expected at any moment. By the time, therefore, that he was ready to advance, the Union general felt sure that another invasion of the North was no longer to be apprehended, and that he could safely adopt the interior line. The 12th corps, under Slocum, was, however, stationed at Harper's Ferry and near Sharpsburg, and Morell, with about 4500 men, was directed to guard the upper Potomac.²

On October 26th³ the rest of the Federal army, numbering 110,665 officers and men,⁴ began crossing the Potomac at and below Harper's Ferry. The right flank of the columns was covered by the cavalry under Pleasonton. The march was in the general direction of Warrenton. The gaps in the Blue Ridge were successively occupied to prevent any interruption of the communications with Maryland. On November 5th the army ceased drawing its supplies from Harper's Ferry, and began to receive them by the Manassas Gap railroad.⁵ Efforts were also at

¹ 27 W. R., 83.

² *Id.*, 86.

³ *Id.*, 86. The last division crossed on November 2d; 28 W. R., 531.

⁴ 28 W. R., 569.

⁵ *Id.*, 544.

once made to repair the Orange and Alexandria railroad as far as Warrenton Junction.¹

On the 7th of November the Army of the Potomac was concentrated in the neighborhood of Warrenton.² On that day, by an order of the President, dated November 5th, General McClellan was relieved from the command of the army, and General Burnside was appointed in his place.³ Nothing in the correspondence between Mr. Lincoln and General McClellan had indicated that such a crisis was at hand. The letters of the President had been, as his letters always were, considerate, kind, and friendly. The explanation of his change of attitude towards McClellan is, we suspect, to be found in the culmination of the movement against McClellan and Fitz-John Porter, which had its origin in the events of the latter part of Pope's campaign. We draw this inference from the fact that in the same order which relieved McClellan, Fitz-John Porter was also relieved from the command of his corps. He was, soon after, tried for disobedience of orders, and misconduct in the presence of the enemy on August 29, 1862, and was cashiered. Many years afterwards he obtained a rehearing of his case, was fully and handsomely vindicated, and, in 1886, was restored to the army.⁴ But at this time, in the autumn of 1862, there was a very bitter feeling in influential quarters in Washington against both McClellan and Porter, and this order of November 5th, removing them both from command, was the result of the hostility to them. In

¹ 28 W. R., 549, 555, 559.

² 27 W. R., 88.

³ 28 W. R., 545.

⁴ See *ante*, 282, n. 2.

the case of McClellan, however, there were other reasons, which have been sufficiently referred to above.

It is not necessary to give here a *résumé* of the character and abilities of General McClellan. They have been freely commented on in the course of this narrative. We will confine ourselves to one observation, and that is, that McClellan ought not to have been removed unless the Government were prepared to put in his place some officer whom they knew to be at least his equal in military capacity. This, assuredly, was not the case at this moment. No one, in or out of the service, had ever considered Burnside as able a man as McClellan. His appointment was a genuine surprise to every one at all acquainted with military affairs. His recent shortcomings at the battle of Sharpsburg were the common talk of the officers and soldiers, who all believed that if Burnside had been energetic and skilful, the bridge would have been carried and Antietam Creek would have been forded in the morning, and that Lee would have been defeated in the afternoon. It is not easy to justify Mr. Lincoln's action in this matter. It may be true that no one of the generals had ever been specially marked out in the opinion of the army or the public as a possible successor to McClellan; but we believe that the selection of Franklin would have met with the widest approval, and would have been decidedly the most judicious appointment which the Government could have made.¹ Franklin, like McClellan, was a safe and

¹ According to General Slocum, this was the President's opinion; but the opposition to Franklin on political grounds was too strong. Franklin's *Memoirs of a Rear-Admiral*, 9, 10.

careful commander; he had recently shown at Sharpsburg unmistakable evidence of possessing a true appreciation of the real military situation on the field of battle, and we have always been surprised that his name was not the one selected for the vacant place of commander of the army. He was, without question, far superior in point of ability to Burnside, Hooker, and Sumner, and it was to be expected that the selection would be made from these four generals. Burnside's successful expedition to North Carolina, however, told much in his favor; and it is not likely that either the President or the Secretary of War possessed, either then or at any subsequent time, any means of ascertaining the opinion of the best men in the army respecting the merit of the leading officers. Burnside himself, as is well known, accepted the position with the greatest reluctance.¹ He assured the officer who brought him the order that he did not consider himself equal to the responsibilities which the command of the army involved²; but he allowed himself to be over-persuaded, and set himself, after a day or two, to devising a plan of operations.

It is time that we returned to the Army of Northern Virginia. General Lee kept his troops in their camps near Winchester until the movement of the Federal army across the Potomac attracted his attention. Then, on November 2d, he himself, with the corps of Longstreet, crossed the Blue Ridge at Front Royal, leaving Jackson with his corps in the Valley.³ It thus happened that at and about the

¹ 28 W. R., 554.

² Cf. 1 C. W. (1863), 650.

³ 27 W. R., 152, 156.

time of General McClellan's removal from the command of the Army of the Potomac, Lee, with Longstreet's corps, was near Culpeper Court House, while Jackson was near Millwood,¹ a small town ten or fifteen miles south of Winchester. Lee was in a good deal of doubt as to McClellan's intentions. At times he thought it possible that McClellan might be planning to send into the Valley a force large enough to deal with Jackson, while reserving sufficient troops to resist a counter attack from Longstreet.² But this was not one of McClellan's schemes. When Lee learned that the Union army had occupied Warrenton and was proceeding to cross the Rappahannock, thus threatening to push Longstreet towards Gordonsville, he at first (November 6th) directed Jackson to ascend the Shenandoah Valley to Swift Run Gap in order to make a junction with Longstreet, and he himself prepared to withdraw the latter's corps from Culpeper toward Madison Court House to facilitate this junction.³ On the 8th, also, Lee, apparently apprehensive lest the advance of the Federal army, which he felt he could not successfully oppose with Longstreet's corps alone, might close even Swift Run Gap, reiterated his order to Jackson to ascend the Valley.⁴ On the 9th, however, we find Lee, having received despatches from Jackson,⁵ giving that officer ample discretion, —permitting him not only to remain in the lower Valley with the object of operating on the flank and rear of the Federal army through the lower Gaps in

¹ 28 W. R., 696.

³ *Ib.*, 698, 701, 703.

² *Ib.*, 696-698.

⁴ *Ib.*, 704.

⁵ Unfortunately, these letters of Jackson have not been preserved.

the Blue Ridge, but even to make a demonstration of crossing into Maryland, if he deemed it advisable.¹ At this time Longstreet's corps showed a total of officers and men "present for duty" of 31,925, and Jackson's of 31,794, while Stuart's cavalry numbered 7176; showing a total of 70,895 officers and men "present for duty"² in the Army of Northern Virginia.

McClellan stayed a couple of days with Burnside,³ who was a personal friend of his, to give him all needed information, and, presumably, to confer with him about the situation of the army and the prospects of the campaign. In his report McClellan says⁴:

"The reports from General Pleasonton, on the advance, indicated the possibility of separating the two wings of the enemy's forces, and either beating Longstreet separately, or forcing him to fall back, at least, upon Gordonsville, to effect his junction with the rest of the army [*i. e.*, Jackson's corps]. . . . Had I remained in command, I should have made the attempt to divide the enemy as before suggested; and, could he have been brought to a battle within reach of my supplies, I cannot doubt that the result would have been a brilliant victory for our army."

If one were disposed to be very critical, one might object to General McClellan's speaking of attempting to divide the army of his enemy, seeing that it was at that moment divided into two nearly equal parts, separated from each other by not less than forty or

¹ 28 W. R., 705, 710, 711.

² *Ib.*, 713. In this statement there is no return for the reserve artillery.

³ McClellan left the army on November 10th; *ib.*, 558.

⁴ 27 W. R., 89.

fifty miles. But his meaning is plain enough. He means to say that, if he had remained in command, he would have advanced against Lee and Longstreet in the hope of bringing them to a battle, and that he had great hopes of success in such a battle. But he implies that there would have been a limit to the extent of his advance, fixed by his ability to support his army by the use of the railroad; and he omits entirely to give any hint of his course in case he should be unable to force Lee and Longstreet to accept battle.

Consider now that Lee and Longstreet could not possibly expect to win a battle against such great odds; that there was nothing whatever to prevent them from retreating to Gordonsville, or beyond Gordonsville, and there uniting with Jackson; and that it was not to be expected that they would omit to destroy the railroad—McClellan's only source of supply—as they retired; and the practical advantage to the Union commander of the separation between the two wings of his adversary's army is certainly not very apparent. But suppose that Jackson remains in the Valley, that McClellan advances to Gordonsville, and endeavors to get Lee and Longstreet to accept battle there. McClellan's line of supplies would now be a hundred miles long, and what would there be to prevent Jackson from emerging from one of the Gaps in the Blue Ridge and attempting to cut the railroad?¹ In such a case McClellan would almost certainly fall back. It has been so often said that McClellan, when he was relieved

¹ See Haupt to Burnside, 28 W. R., 560.

from command, was on the eve of a great battle,¹ that it has seemed best to point out that, even according to his own estimate of the military situation, this was not the case. He had really no chance of fighting a battle unless he could induce Lee and Longstreet to fight when it was plainly for their advantage to retire. And, of course, this was equally true of his successor.

Nevertheless, to advance towards Culpeper as rapidly as possible was clearly the thing for General Burnside to do. There was a chance—a small chance, it is true, but still a chance—of surprising Lee and Longstreet. In war it is not always that appearances are correctly interpreted, that information is promptly sent, that staff-officers arrive in time. Moreover, the march on Culpeper would not in any way have interfered with the step which Burnside had finally resolved on taking. This was, to make a complete change in his base of operations; to give up the Orange and Alexandria railroad as a line of supply; to march on Fredericksburg, and be thenceforth supplied from Aquia Creek by means of the railroad from that place to Fredericksburg. From Fredericksburg Burnside proposed to march directly on Richmond.

This plan of operations Burnside sketched out in a letter to General Cullum, Halleck's chief-of-staff, dated November 7th, but not despatched till the 9th.² He required that trains of supplies should

¹ Swinton, 232, 233; 2 Comte de Paris, 554.

² 28 W. R., 552, 558. For a plan of campaign *via* Culpeper and Gordonsville, see a letter from General Sigel to General Burnside, dated November 13th; *ib.*, 574-576.

be sent from Washington or Alexandria to the neighborhood of Fredericksburg, and that barges loaded with provisions and forage should be sent to Aquia Creek and Belle Plain. Pontoons, also, "enough to span the Rappahannock with two tracks," he also desired should be sent to meet his army.

It will be noticed that it was General Burnside's intention to move down towards Fredericksburg on the north side of the Rappahannock, and, when opposite the town, to cross the river on pontoon-bridges. For these bridges he was dependent on the Washington authorities, as no pontoon-trains were accompanying the army. He thus contemplated beginning his march on Richmond by crossing the Rappahannock River at Fredericksburg, an operation which it was certainly not impossible that the enemy might oppose.¹ Had he crossed the river at Rappahannock Station and marched on Culpeper, Lee and Longstreet would in all probability have retired behind the Rapidan, and in that event Burnside could have crossed that river at Germanna, Ely, and the other fords, and moved on Spottsylvania Court House without the necessity of going to Fredericksburg at all, exactly as General Grant did in May, 1864. In that case the army could have been supplied by wagons from Port Royal on the

¹ General Halleck says (31 W. R., 47) that Burnside consented "so to modify his plan as to cross his army by the fords of the Upper Rappahannock, and then move down and seize the heights south of Fredericksburg." But General Burnside says (*ib.*, 84) that he was "to move the main army to Falmouth, opposite Fredericksburg, and then cross the Rappahannock on pontoon-bridges, which were to be sent from Washington."

Rappahannock, as in the latter part of May, 1864.¹ Of course, Lee might have attacked Burnside, as he attacked Grant in the Wilderness; but Lee had only Longstreet's corps with him, and could hardly have hoped to succeed. In fact, a battle with Longstreet's corps alone was just what Burnside wanted. It is not easy to see why the operation suggested above would not have been decidedly preferable to the course which was adopted by General Burnside.

The letter containing General Burnside's plan of operations arrived in Washington by special messenger on the evening of the 10th of November and was in the President's hands the next morning.² It was not until the 14th that the President gave to the general's scheme what seems to have been a rather reluctant assent.³ "He thinks," wrote Halleck to Burnside, "that it will succeed, if you move very rapidly; otherwise not."

Burnside, however, made no unnecessary delay. On this day, the 14th of November, he issued an order organizing his army into three Grand Divisions (so called) and a Reserve Corps. The 2d and 9th corps formed the Right Grand Division, under General Sumner; the 3d and 5th corps formed the Centre Grand Division, under General Hooker; and

¹ This course substantially was suggested by General Hooker; 31 W. R., 355; 1 C. W. (1863), 654, 666; and Burnside said that he intended establishing a depot at Port Royal later on; 1 C. W. (1863), 652.

² 28 W. R., 570.

³ General Halleck was much opposed to Burnside's plan, and favored "continuing the movement of the army in the direction of Culpeper and Gordonsville"; 31 W. R., 47, 83, 84. The President's assent was given, so General Halleck says, to the plan of crossing the Rappahannock at the upper fords, above the Rapidan. This was denied by General Burnside in his Report; *ib.*, 84.

the 1st and 6th corps formed the Left Grand Division, under General Franklin. The 11th corps and some other troops, under General Sigel, formed the Reserve Corps. On the morning of the 15th Sumner began the march, and on the 17th he had reached Falmouth, a village nearly opposite Fredericksburg. In a day or two Hooker and Franklin arrived. But the pontoons did not arrive. That they did not was not the fault of General Burnside, certainly. It may be, also, that it was not the fault of General Halleck. It would, however, seem that the latter ought to have entrusted to some efficient officer of his staff the whole matter of getting the pontoons from the custody of the officers who had charge of them, and of forwarding them to Falmouth,—of procuring the necessary wagons and horses and barges,—giving him full authority to overrule all other authority, and impressing upon him the extreme importance of having the pontoons ready and on the spot as soon as the army should arrive at Falmouth.¹ This certainly was not done; and it was not until the 25th of November that the pontoons arrived. While the army was waiting on the north bank of the river, Burnside considered and finally rejected a plan of sending a body of troops across the river by the fords to hold the town and the heights back of the town, for the reason that the depth of water in the river at that season was liable to great fluctuations, and that it might easily happen that the troops thus sent over to the south side might be obliged to encounter superior numbers before they could be reinforced or withdrawn.²

¹ See I C. W. (1863), 649.

² 31 W. R., 85. Cf. Palfrey, 139.

Meantime, General Lee, who had, as early as November 12th,¹ considered it not improbable that his enemy, in place of proceeding to Culpeper and beyond, in the hope of forcing Longstreet to a battle, might march on Fredericksburg, ordered the railroad from Aquia Creek to Fredericksburg, which, though not in use, had not been broken up (except by burning the bridges) since the Federal evacuation of those places in September, to be thoroughly destroyed.² On the 17th the indications of the march of the Federal army towards Fredericksburg became more apparent.³ On the 18th Lee sent McLaws's division there from Culpeper,⁴ and, later on the same day, the rest of Longstreet's corps started for the same place,⁵ arriving there on the 21st, or a day or two later.

Lee had not, however, definitely decided to fight at Fredericksburg. On the 19th he wrote to Jackson from Culpeper that he "did not anticipate making a determined stand north of the North Anna."⁶ Had he intended from the first to fight at Fredericksburg, we cannot suppose that he would have deferred so long ordering Jackson to join him; but Lee's first inclination, when the Federal movement on Fredericksburg became apparent, was to allow Burnside to advance as far as the North Anna. Keeping this in mind, one can perhaps understand in some measure the reasons which induced General Lee, who was in face of a largely superior force, to leave (as he did)

¹ 28 W. R., 714, 715.

² *Ib.*, 717; 31 W. R., 1014.

³ *Ib.*, 1014, 1015.

⁴ *Ib.*, 1019.

⁵ *Ib.*, 1019, 1020.

⁶ *Ib.*, 549, 1021. See, also, 3 B. & L., 72, n.

so completely to his lieutenant the decision as to the time and place of joining his wing to the main army. The attitude of Lee towards Jackson during this period is, however, even with this explanation, not easy to understand. It is evident that Lee, at Culpeper with Longstreet, felt uneasy while Jackson was in the Valley, and was inclined to the opinion that Jackson ought to join him. In fact, on November 6th, he ordered Jackson to ascend the Valley, in order to make a junction with Longstreet¹; yet, after this, he gave him no positive orders, but left everything to Jackson's discretion, while expressing his own opinion in unmistakable terms. Thus, on November 14th, Lee writes that he cannot see what good Jackson's continuance in the Valley can effect beyond the support of his troops, but he leaves it to him to determine the question whether he will continue there or march at once to join Longstreet.² So, again, on the 18th, Lee informs Jackson that the Union army is going towards Fredericksburg, and that his own force is preparing to move there; and adds, "unless you think it is advantageous for you to continue longer in the Valley . . . I think it would be advisable to put some of your divisions in motion across the mountains."³ The next day, Lee, near Culpeper, writes to Jackson,⁴ near Winchester, acknowledging a letter⁵ just received from him, and reminding him of the necessity of their joining forces before a battle, but leaving it to Jack-

¹ 28 W. R., 701; Lee to Randolph.

² *Ib.*, 720.

³ 31 W. R., 1019.

⁴ *Ib.*, 1021.

⁵ These letters are all missing.

son to decide how long he can remain in the Valley, and yet be able to unite with Longstreet for a battle. Even after Lee had arrived at Fredericksburg we find him on November 23d writing to Jackson in the same vein; expressing distinctly his own opinion that Jackson ought to cross the mountains, but abstaining from giving him any order.¹ In this letter he tells Jackson that Burnside's whole army is opposite Fredericksburg.

But, quite as remarkable as is the fact that Lee gave to his lieutenant such ample discretion is the view which he entertained of the requirements of the military situation. Lee, in his letter of November 23d,² did not order Jackson to join him at Fredericksburg, but preferred that he should halt at Culpeper, a place not less than forty miles from Fredericksburg. "I have thought," wrote General Lee to Jackson two days later,³ "that if we could take a threatening position on his [Burnside's] right flank, as a basis from which Stuart with his cavalry could operate energetically, he would be afraid to advance. . . . I believe now, if you take a position at Culpeper Court House, throw forward your advance to Rappahannock Station, and cross the cavalry over the river, the enemy would hesitate long before making a forward movement." We suppose General Lee must have had in mind Burnside's probable course after he should have taken Fredericksburg. For it is plain that Burnside could cross the river more easily, if anything, were Jackson forty miles away; that Lee would hardly

¹ 31 W. R., 1027.² *Ib.*, 1027.³ *Ib.*, 1031.

undertake to hold the heights of Fredericksburg with Longstreet's corps alone; and that Burnside's situation for future operations would be improved by the occupation of the city and its vicinity. His subsequent advance, however, on Richmond would no doubt be harassed by the presence of Jackson on his right flank, especially if he should continue to draw his supplies from Aquia Creek; but if he should soon change his base to Port Royal, and, later, to White House, as Grant did in 1864, no interference with his communications need be feared.

But this plan for the detachment of Jackson's command came to nothing. General Lee, on the 26th and 27th of November,¹ influenced partly by the lateness of the season and the consequent danger that the roads might become bad, which would render the co-operation of Jackson difficult, and partly by certain indications that the Union general intended crossing the river before long, wrote to Jackson to join him, if in Jackson's judgment nothing was likely to be gained by his remaining away. Jackson joined the main army by the 30th of November.² One hardly knows which is the more remarkable,—General Lee's sagacity in estimating the inertia of his antagonist, or his temerity in confronting him so long with a force only one third as strong, and actually for a time refusing the aid which Jackson was bringing to him.

¹ 31 W. R., 1033, 1035.

² Burnside's pontoons, it must be remembered, arrived on November 25th; *ib.*, 798. The railroad from Aquia Creek to Falmouth was completed on the 26th; 1 C. W. (1863), 683.

It has been suggested that Lee could have stopped the movement of the Federal army¹ towards Fredericksburg by approaching Washington as soon as Burnside had left the line of the Orange and Alexandria railroad. Very possibly this is true. But for Lee to have done this would have been to risk a battle in which he would have been opposed by a well-appointed army much larger than his own, and to do this without any other object than that of winning that battle. For at this season of the year no invasion of the North was practicable; and at this time Washington was strongly held.² The situation was, moreover, very different from that which existed in the previous August, when Lee advanced against Pope on the railroad with the object of defeating him before he could be joined by the troops of the Army of the Potomac, which Halleck had so unwisely sent from the Peninsula to Fredericksburg, instead of to Alexandria.

The two armies were now confronting each other on the banks of the Rappahannock. The Union army consisted of about 122,000 officers and men of all arms of the service³; the Confederates numbered about 78,500.⁴ For a trial of strength the armies were not unequally matched, as the position of the Confederate army on the heights behind the town of Fredericksburg was an extremely strong one, and Burnside gave his adversary abundant time in which to strengthen it by art,—an opportunity which was skilfully improved.

¹ Swinton, 235.

² About 47,000 men "present for duty"; 31 W. R., 939.

³ *Ib.*, 1121.

⁴ *Ib.*, 1057.

After some tentative movements at points down the river, especially at a place called Skinker's Neck, which resulted in nothing, Burnside, on December 10th, decided on a plan of operations.

Of the pontoon-bridges by which the Rappahannock (which is here about 140 yards wide¹) was to be crossed, two were to be laid directly in front of the town of Fredericksburg, and two others about two miles below these.² The Right Grand Division under Sumner was to cross over at the upper bridges, the Left Grand Division under Franklin at the lower bridges, while the Centre Grand Division under Hooker was to connect the two other Divisions, and its troops were to be distributed as occasion might require. Two bridges were to be laid for its convenience. The task of establishing the bridges was to be performed under the protection of a powerful artillery fire from Stafford Heights, a ridge which skirted the north side of the river.

The Confederates were posted on a range of heights which ran from a hill called Taylor's Hill, about two miles northwest of the town of Fredericksburg, and continued—broken, however, by streams and ravines—in a southeasterly direction to a place known as Hamilton's Crossing, where the right of their line rested. Stuart with his cavalry protected this flank. Longstreet held the left of their position, and Jackson the right. The whole line was more than six miles in length.

Early on the morning of December 11th the Federal engineer troops, supported by some regiments

¹ Allan, 466 ; 31 W. R., 171.

² See Map XIII., facing page 468.

of the line, began the task of laying the pontoons. On the Federal left, where there were but few houses on the opposite shore, no difficulty or opposition of any consequence was experienced, and by 11 A.M. both bridges were laid. One brigade of the 6th corps—that of Devens—crossed that afternoon, and held the position during the night. Early the next morning the rest of Franklin's troops began to cross, and by 3 P.M. the 1st and 6th corps were in position on the farther bank.

The case of the upper bridges was, however, entirely different, for they were thrown across the river opposite the town, and not even the constant fire of the Union battery on Stafford Heights availed to dislodge the sharpshooters of Barksdale's Mississippi brigade. These daring and obstinate fighters ensconced themselves in the stone or brick houses and cellars in the lower part of the town near the bank of the river, and actually prevented the completion of the bridges by picking off the workmen. About 4 P.M., however, General Hunt, the Federal chief-of-artillery, suggested that pontoons filled with troops might be poled or rowed over the river. The suggestion was at once adopted; volunteers were called for; the 7th Michigan, the 19th and 20th Massachusetts, and the 89th New York gallantly stepped to the front, and crossed the river in the boats.¹ On landing, the Confederates were at once attacked; they made an obstinate defence; the struggle continued till dark, when they retired from the town; but meantime the bridges were completed. How-

¹ 31 W. R., 183, 221, 262, 282, 283, 310.

ard's division of the 2d corps occupied the town on the night of the 11th, and on the next day the rest of the 2d corps and the 9th corps crossed the river.

The 3d and 5th corps—constituting Hooker's Grand Division—remained on the north bank during the night of the 12th; and on the next day the divisions composing them were assigned to the support of the Right and Left Grand Divisions.

On the afternoon of the 12th, General Burnside came to the headquarters of General Franklin, and discussed the situation with him, General Reynolds, the commander of the 1st corps, and General W. F. Smith, the commander of the 6th corps.¹ Two of Stoneman's divisions (3d corps) had been added by Burnside to Franklin's command, raising the total to at least 50,000 men.² As the Confederate left wing was evidently in a very strong position, almost impregnable to direct attack, it was plain that on the employment to the best advantage of the large force assigned to Franklin depended the success of the next day's battle.

The field of operations of the left wing of the Army of the Potomac was bounded on the right by a stream, running through a rugged and impassable ravine, called Deep Run. The only line of supply and retreat was over the pontoon-bridges, which had been laid just south of Deep Run, and were, there-

¹ I C. W. (1863), 767; Franklin's Reply, 1. This "Reply" was a pamphlet written by General Franklin, defending himself from the unjust and unfounded aspersions against his action contained in the Report of the Committee on the Conduct of the War. See I C. W. (1863), 57.

² *Ib.*, 709. General Reynolds puts the figure at "55,000 to 60,000 men." *Ib.*, 699.

fore, behind the extreme right of Franklin's line of battle. As the enemy's right at Hamilton's Crossing was obviously not resting on any natural obstacle, and as he had thrown up works and had protected them by *abatis* all along his front, it was sufficiently plain to General Franklin that the operation most likely to succeed was a movement in large force against the Confederate extreme right, in which both his rear and flank could be threatened ; and also that, in order to carry out such a movement,—Hamilton's Crossing being some two miles from the bridges,—important changes would have to be made during the ensuing night in the disposition of the Union troops. In an account of this matter given before the Committee on the Conduct of the War on March 28, 1863, Franklin says :¹ "I urged him [Burnside] to give orders which would enable me to put the command in such a position that a very strong attack could be made there at daybreak the next morning." In his Reply to the Report of the Committee, Franklin also says² : "I strongly advised General Burnside to make an attack from my Division upon the enemy's right with a column of at least 30,000 men, to be sent in at daylight in the morning. At that time two divisions of General Hooker's command were on the north side of the river, near the bridges I had crossed. In order to make such an attack as I had advised, I informed General Burnside that these divisions must be crossed during the night. I reiterated my request that I should receive my orders as early as possible, that

¹ 1 C. W. (1863), 707.² Franklin's Reply, 2.

I might make the necessary dispositions of the troops before daylight.”¹ Franklin then goes on to say that Burnside promised to send him the orders in two or three hours, and, at any rate, before midnight, but that they never came until half-past seven in the morning.

When the order² did come, it was found to be as far as possible from an order to attack the Confederate right wing with all Franklin’s disposable force. It directed Franklin to do two things:

1. To “keep” his “whole command in position for a rapid movement down the Old Richmond Road”; and,
2. To “send out at once a division, at least, to pass below Smithfield, to seize, if possible, the height near Captain Hamilton’s, on this side of the Massaponax, taking care to keep it well supported and its line of retreat open.”

The only attack contemplated in this order is plainly one to be made by a single division, well supported, and so handled that, if necessary, it can retreat on the main body.

The only operation indicated in this order to be made by the bulk of Franklin’s command is “a rapid movement down the Old Richmond Road,” and in the last part of the order Franklin is told again to “keep” his “whole command in readiness to move at once, as soon as the fog lifts.”

Burnside, therefore, had another scheme in his mind for winning the battle than that recommended by Franklin. What it was appears from another

¹ Cf. General W. F. Smith’s paper in 3 B. & L., 128, 133.

² 31 W. R., 71.

part of the order to Franklin. "He [Burnside]¹ has ordered another column of a division or more to be moved from General Sumner's command² up the Plank road to its intersection³ with the Telegraph road, where they [*sic*] will divide, with a view to seizing the heights on both of these roads. Holding these two heights, with the heights near Captain Hamilton's, will, he hopes, compel the enemy to evacuate the whole ridge between these points."⁴ But why the Confederates should be driven by "a division or more" from the heights on their left, and by another division, even if "well supported," from the heights on their right, it is not easy to conjecture. One rises from the perusal of this famous order with a feeling of hopeless amazement that such a wild and absurd plan of battle should ever have been entertained by any one.⁵

With such an erroneous idea of the task before him, and with such inadequate plans of dealing with it, it was not to be expected that General Burnside would succeed. He had in truth but one chance of winning a victory over General Lee's army on that ground; and that was (as we have intimated above) to recognize frankly the impregnable character of

¹ The order was signed by the chief-of-staff; hence, Burnside is spoken of in the third person.

² For the order to Sumner, see 31 W. R., 90.

³ In point of fact these roads did not intersect, but ran parallel to each other as far as the Confederate line of defence, where they widely separated.

⁴ 31 W. R., 71.

⁵ Burnside states in his Report (*ib.*, 90, 91) that the seizure of the heights near Captain Hamilton's would enable the remainder of Franklin's forces "to move down the Old Richmond Road," and thus get in rear of the Confederate position on the crest of the ridge. But to do this before he had beaten his enemy would expose his bridge-communications to certain capture.

the Confederate left, and to entrust fully and entirely to Franklin the preparation for and management of an attack on the Confederate right to be made by more than half of the Federal army. This, as we have seen, Burnside did not do. It remains briefly to sketch the events of the day.

Franklin was the first to begin. He conferred with Reynolds, who commanded the 1st corps, as to the mode of carrying out the order which was received at 7.30 A.M. Reynolds entrusted to Meade, who commanded the 3d division of his corps, the task which Burnside's order directed should be performed by "a division at least, well supported,"—that of carrying the height at Captain Hamilton's,—and he supported Meade by Gibbon's division on his right and Doubleday's on his left and rear. Meade started out between 9 and 10 A.M., but his march was so interfered with by the Confederate artillery under Stuart, and especially by a section under the distinguished Captain Pegram, that he made slow progress, and finally other troops had to be brought forward. Soon after twelve o'clock, however, he made his attack, and succeeded in penetrating the enemy's lines and capturing several hundred prisoners. Gibbon, also, won a similar, though not so important, success. But the Confederates rallied and were reinforced, and drove back both divisions with considerable loss and in great confusion,¹ and pursued their advantage until checked by the resistance of other Federal troops. Nothing of

¹ 31 W. R., 359, 513; 1 C. W. (1863), 705. That Franklin considered the situation serious at one time, is shown by his despatch to Burnside, 31 W. R., 118.

permanent importance was gained by the Union advance, and, in fact, it cannot be said that the arrangements for supporting the troops engaged—still less for following up any advantage—were satisfactory. General Franklin felt himself greatly hampered by the injunction—twice repeated in Burnside's order to him—"to keep his whole command in position for a rapid movement down the Old Richmond Road."¹ This portion of the order unquestionably prevented Franklin from making adequate preparation for the carrying out of the portion of the order which prescribed the task of the single division. The two parts of the order were, in truth, inconsistent with each other. The difficulty, in fact, lay farther back even than this. No success of any moment could be expected under the circumstances which existed in that part of the field, unless a much larger affair than the advance of one division was made the object to be attained. That the object ordered to be attained was of such limited scope was the fault of Burnside alone.

Between 2 and 3 P.M. Burnside sent another order² to Franklin "to make a vigorous attack with his whole force," but it was received too late to admit of the necessary dispositions being made for the employment of the troops in any other way than that in which they were at the time occupied.³

Franklin's loss in this battle amounted to nearly 5000 men.⁴

¹ Franklin's testimony, C. W. (1863), 710; Reynolds's testimony, *ib.*, 699, 700.

² 31 W. R., 94, 128.

³ 1 C. W. (1863), 711. *Contra*, Birney's testimony, *ib.*, 706.

⁴ 31 W. R., 133-142.

General Burnside says in his Report that the movements of Franklin and Sumner were not intended to be simultaneous; that he did not intend to move Sumner until he had "learned that Franklin was about to gain the heights near Hamilton's."¹ No doubt it would have been wiser to have adhered to this determination. But he did not adhere to it. "General Sumner's corps was held in position," continues the Report,² "until after 11 o'clock, in the hope that Franklin would make such an impression upon the enemy as would enable him [Sumner] to carry the enemy's line near the Telegraph and Plank roads. Feeling the importance of haste, I now directed General Sumner to commence his attack." At this moment the despatches which Burnside was receiving from General Hardie of his staff, whom he had sent to be with Franklin, and to keep him informed as to the progress of the fight there, showed him that Franklin was having a hard, if not a doubtful, contest with the enemy. That dated 11 A.M. reads³: "Meade advanced half a mile, and holds on. . . . Later: Reynolds has been forced to develop his whole line. An attack of some force of enemy's troops on our left seems probable." It is plain that Burnside, whether (as he says) "feeling the importance of haste," or, more likely, impatient at the slow progress of Franklin's movements, departed from his original intention, and ordered Sumner to make the attack on his front while the issue of Franklin's battle was still in doubt.

¹ 31 W. R., 91. He also so stated to the Committee on the Conduct of the War; 1 C. W. (1863), 653.

² 31 W. R., 94.

³ *Ib.*, 91.

The Federal right attack had but a small chance of success. There was, however, in this part of the field but one thing to do—if anything was to be done—and that was to storm the Confederate works in front. It was simply necessary to enlarge the scope of Burnside's inadequate order by sending in all the available troops, instead of the "division or more" specified in the order.¹ As the 2d corps (Couch's) occupied the town, it was for it to make the attack in the first place, and for the 9th corps to follow, if it should be deemed advisable. As the divisions of Couch emerged from the town, they found themselves in an open plain, with the Confederate intrenchments in their front only 600 or 700 yards distant. From the hills on their right (Taylor's and Stanbury's) the Confederate artillery poured upon them an enfilading fire. Directly in face was Marye's Hill, near the foot of which ran a road, parallel to the line of battle, which had been cut through the hill in such a way that the side nearest to the Federal attack was protected by a stone wall and sheltered by the slope of the earth, so as to resemble a covered way. This side had been artificially strengthened, and the road now constituted an intrenchment practically impregnable. Above this sunken road and on the summit of Marye's Hill the Confederates had posted their supports and batteries.

The division of French, which was to make the first attack, marched, on leaving the town, up the Orange Plank and Telegraph roads for 300 yards

¹ 31 W. R., 90.

or so until a canal, or sluiceway, was reached, which crossed the roads¹ at right angles. This canal, or ditch, could only be crossed by bridges. Until these bridges were crossed, the troops marched in column, and were exposed to the enemy's artillery fire in front and flank. On crossing, the troops deployed for the assault under the precarious shelter afforded by a slight rise in the ground, and shortly after 12 m., they advanced to the attack in the most gallant style. But the fire was too much for them. The sunken road could not be carried.² Couch at once ordered in his other divisions under Hancock and Howard. But it was in vain. Many of the officers and men, it is true, got up within a short distance of the Confederate lines, but they were mostly killed or wounded. Those who survived were obliged to lie down, and could not be withdrawn until after dark. The losses were terrible.

The failure of the attempt of the 2d corps ought to have satisfied General Burnside that his enemy's position was too strong to be carried, but it did not. He insisted on more and more assaults. The division of Sturgis and one brigade of that of Getty from the 9th corps and the divisions of Griffin and Humphreys of the 5th corps were all thrown in. These troops gallantly attempted to carry Marye's Hill, but they were repulsed with great slaughter before they could reach the stone wall. The Federal losses in these various attacks, which were all made with great bravery and were persistently and coura-

¹ These roads ran parallel to each other and were about 300 yards apart. The Orange Plank was the northerly one.

² 31 W. R., 222, 223.

geously pushed, amounted to not far from 8000 men. The loss of the whole army was 12,653 men.¹

In the Confederate army, Longstreet lost 1519, killed and wounded, and Jackson 2682, making a total of 4201.² Besides these losses, Longstreet's corps was reported as having 127³ missing, and Jackson's 526,⁴ making the total loss 4854.

General Burnside was desirous of renewing the attack the next day, and even proposed to lead his old corps, the 9th, in column of regiments, to carry by storm the stone wall below Marye's Hill. But he was dissuaded by the unanimous remonstrances of his officers.⁵ On the night of the 15th the army recrossed the river, and the troops returned to their old camps at Falmouth.

In reviewing this bloody defeat of the Army of the Potomac, one is moved to wonder at the fact that General Burnside made the attempt at all. He had practically no chance of success in assaulting the Confederate left⁶; and even if he had given Franklin *carte blanche* as respects the attack on the Confederate right, and had that able officer done what he told Burnside he proposed to do,—had, during the night, massed 30,000 troops on his extreme left, and had assaulted the heights at Hamilton's Crossing at day-break,—the issue of the battle would have been far

¹ 31 W. R., 142.

² *Ib.*, 562.

³ *Ib.*, 572.

⁴ *Ib.*, 635.

⁵ 1 C. W. (1863), 653; Palfrey, 188; Swinton, 253; 31 W. R., 312.

⁶ See the excellent criticism of General Palfrey on this subject, Palfrey, 184, 185.

from certain. For, in thus placing the bulk of his disposable force near Hamilton's Crossing, Franklin would have exposed his communications—that is, the pontoon-bridges—to an attack by Jackson's left, and Jackson's left could have been strengthened to any needed extent by reinforcements sent by Longstreet. It can hardly be doubted that a serious, well-sustained attack on the two divisions of the 3d corps, which Franklin would have stationed to hold the bridges, would have checked the Federal troops, even in the midst of a successful attempt to turn Jackson's right. Nothing short of a complete rout of Jackson's extreme right—which was hardly to be expected—would have answered Franklin's needs. Not but what the plan proposed by Franklin was the best of which the circumstances admitted; but that the circumstances were very unfavorable to the achievement of any success of moment by the Union army in the battle of Fredericksburg.

The only important reason given by General Burnside for fighting the battle was that he thought that the troops which General Lee had sent down the river to oppose the landing of the Federal army in that region had not returned.¹ It is true that General Lee did not recall these troops until the last moment; he showed on this occasion as on several others a singular lack of caution; the divisions of Early and D. H. Hill did not arrive on the field till the morning of the 13th, and to arrive there then they had to march all night.² But Burnside was not justi-

¹ 31 W. R., 66; 1 C. W. (1863), 652.

² 31 W. R., 630.

fied in attacking such a position as that which General Lee occupied at Fredericksburg simply by assuming that Lee might have unnecessarily delayed the assembling of his army. It may be admitted that this delay on Lee's part was, perhaps, in view of the known facts, rather to be expected; and that had Burnside attacked him on the 12th, he would have had, *pro tanto*, a better chance of success. But, as we have shown above, the position was a very unfavorable one for the Union army; and even the absence of two divisions from the Confederate line of battle would not have compensated Burnside for the radical defects of the situation as viewed from the Federal point of view.

General Burnside, though without doubt considerably affected by the useless sacrifice of life in the battle of Fredericksburg,¹ immediately decided on another forward movement, to be made in the latter part of December.² Much to his surprise, he received a telegram from Mr. Lincoln enjoining him not to take any step without first informing him.³ Burnside then went to Washington, and had a conference with the President and also with General Halleck and the Secretary of War, and ascertained that certain general officers had informed the Government that in their opinion any such operation would end in disaster.⁴ Burnside then attempted to obtain from the President and General Halleck a formal authorization for another movement across the Rappahannock. But in this he could not suc-

¹ 3 B. & L., 138.

² 31 W. R., 95.

³ *Ib.*, 96; 1 C. W. (1863), 717.

⁴ 1 C. W. (1863), 717.

ceed. He finally determined to act on his own authority; and, on January 20, 1863, he moved up the river with a part of his army to the fords of the Rapidan, and was preparing to cross the stream in force when the whole operation was stopped by a storm of unusual violence, which rendered all the roads impassable; and the army, tired, disgusted, and feeling that it had new and just cause of dissatisfaction with its commander, who was universally believed to be incompetent for his high position, returned to its camps near Falmouth.¹

Then General Burnside, apparently wearied with repeated disappointments, having, moreover, abundant reason to know that several of his highest officers considered him to be entirely unfit to command the army, and having come to believe that his ill-success was due mainly to their insubordination, or at least to their unwillingness to serve under him with spirit and heartiness, wrote his celebrated General Order, No. 8,² dismissing from the service Generals Hooker, Brooks, Newton, and Cochrane, and relieving from duty with the Army of the Potomac Generals Franklin, W. F. Smith, Sturgis, Ferrero, and other officers.³ Armed with this order he again went to Washington and had a conference with the President. Mr. Lincoln treated the unfortunate general with his accustomed kindness and consideration. He easily perceived the facts of the situation. He saw that Burnside was not equal to

¹ 31 W. R., 752-755.

² 1 C. W. (1863), 719.

³ 31 W. R., 998. Cf. Franklin's Reply, 11, notes.

the command of the army, and he knew also that every one recognized this to be the fact. He saw that the consciousness of this lack of trust in him by the army had naturally affected Burnside's mind, and that to some extent, at any rate, the unlucky officer deserved his sympathy. But he saw clearly that it was impossible that Burnside should continue in his post. He therefore relieved him from the command of the Army of the Potomac, but refused to accept his resignation from the service, which Burnside in his despondent frame of mind begged him to receive. He gave him, instead, a leave of absence for his home in Providence; and, on the 16th of March, 1863, he appointed him to the command of the Department of the Ohio, with his headquarters at Cincinnati, where he relieved General Wright.

On the 25th of January, 1863, President Lincoln appointed General Hooker to the command of the Army of the Potomac, and relieved Generals Sumner and Franklin from further duty with that organization. Whether Franklin and Sumner were relieved at Hooker's suggestion, we do not know. Sumner, though an old man for a military life, being over sixty years of age, was apparently still strong and vigorous.¹ Franklin's conduct at Fredericksburg was probably never fully understood by Mr. Lincoln, who doubtless thought that with the large number of troops under his command he might have accomplished more had he zealously discharged his duty. To the peculiar difficulties to which we have

¹ He died, however, during the year.

called attention, arising from the nature of the field of battle, and from Burnside's unsuitable and inadequate orders, the President apparently gave no heed. To him, as to many good men, dealing with a subject of which they know little, it was easier to explain a failure by attributing it to moral causes, than to make the effort which a man would have to make who should undertake to master the details of the situation in which his unfortunate subordinate was placed, and to consider the different courses open to him, in the same spirit in which he would deal with any other serious intellectual or practical problem.

Had he made this effort, the President could not have failed to see that Franklin had contributed the only valuable suggestion for winning the battle of Fredericksburg; that criticism on his performance of the petty *rôle* which he was by Burnside condemned to play was a mere waste of time; and that his failure to accomplish anything under such circumstances could in no way justify the removal from the army of so intelligent and capable an officer.

Substantially the same reflections occur when one thinks how the services of Buell and Porter were also, long before the close of the war, lost to the Union cause.





CHAPTER VII.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

It will hardly be denied, we imagine, that the military situation at the close of 1862 was far more favorable for the Southern Confederacy than any one could have predicted at the beginning of the year. Great opportunities had been thrown away by the generals on the Union side.

Twice during the year might the Confederate army of the West have been attacked under exceptionally favorable circumstances by a much more powerful force, but Grant after Shiloh and Halleck after Corinth threw away their chances. No similar opportunities were offered to Buell or to Rosecrans. Hence, at the close of the year we find the army of Bragg resolutely confronting its antagonist on the field of Murfreesborough.

In the East, by the interference of President Lincoln and Secretary Stanton with McClellan's plan of uniting the force under McDowell to the army near Richmond in the latter part of May, the best chance of success offered in the course of the Peninsular campaign was thrown away; while Mc-

Clellan, by not attacking Lee at Sharpsburg on September 16th, failed to improve the most promising opportunity for destroying the Army of Northern Virginia which up to that time had been presented.

The task of the Army of the Potomac had certainly not been lightened by the battle of Fredericksburg, nor had that of the Army of the Cumberland by the battle of Murfreesborough. But the acquisition of Kentucky and of middle Tennessee undoubtedly gave the latter army a great advantage in its efforts for the recovery of East Tennessee.

Of the operations of the Army of the Tennessee under General Grant in the autumn of 1862 in the direction of Vicksburg on the river Mississippi we have not spoken, believing that they should be considered in connection with the subsequent movements of that army, which resulted in the capture of that important place in July, 1863.

We have been able to study the events of the war in the preceding pages with a more personal interest in the chief actors than is ordinarily possible in a military narrative, because the War Records contain the letters and despatches written by these actors at the time, as well as the reports of their achievements or failures written after the happening of these occurrences. The history of this war can therefore be presented, not only as a series of isolated pictures, but as a succession of incidents in the lives of those who had charge of the military operations.

We can therefore see in many cases the aim and

object of movements, whose purpose, in the absence of these letters and despatches, would be matter of conjecture only, and we can trace the connection of events with more confidence, and, it is believed, with more satisfaction.

END OF PART II.



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